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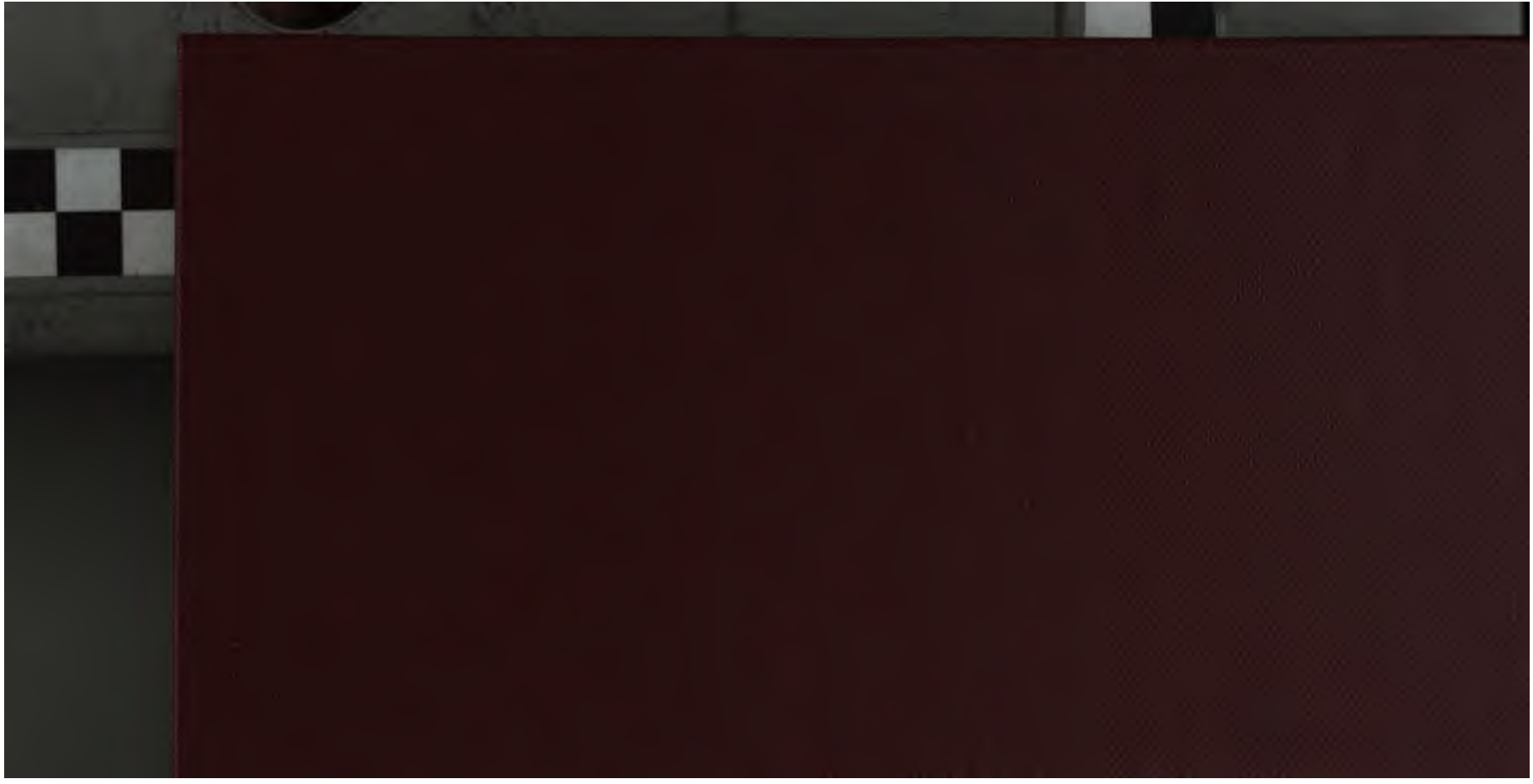

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SERMONS

ON THE

DIGNITY OF MAN,

AND THE VALUE OF THE PRINCIPAL OBJECTS OF HUMAN HAPPINESS.

From the German of the

REV. GEORGE JOACHIM ZOLLIKOFER,
Minister of the Reformed Congregation at Leipsick.

By the Rev. William Tooke, F.R.S.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

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ſhall inherit the earth. Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled. Bleſſed are the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy. Bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God. Bleſſed are the peace-makers: for they ſhall be called the children of God. Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - - 393

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The Value of Social Life.

GOD, who art the father of us all, how cloſely haſt thou connected us with each other! How intimately, how inſeparably intermingled our concerns, our wants, our ſorrows and joys! No one can diſpenſe with others; no one be accompliſhed and happy for himſelf alone; every one may be uſeful to others in numerous ways. How were it poſſible for us here, moſt merciful Father, to miſapprehend thy call to be kindly affectioned one to another with brotherly love, and our deſignment for ſocial life? No, it is thy determination that we ſhould conſort together along the path of life, mutually bear one another's burdens and facilitate the journey to each other, that we ſhould commute thy various gifts and bleſſings with one another, impart to others of our ſubſtance and mutually rejoice in the commutation of benefits and kind offices. By implanting ſtrong ſocial diſpoſitions in our hearts, what ſources of generally uſeful activity and of ge-

nerous pleaſure haſt thou made them! Oh that no ſelfiſh aims, no miſanthropic paſſions might weaken or diſturb theſe ſources of ſatisfaction and delight! Might they ſtill flow more clear and pure, ſtill iſſue more copiouſly, and diffuſe around abundance of true happineſs and joy! Do thou then grant us the underſtanding, the wiſdom, the integrity and virtue which in this reſpect we want. Do thou penetrate and repleniſh our hearts with thoſe gentle, generous, humane ſentiments and diſpoſitions, with that zeal to ſerve and benefit others, with that warm participation, in the proſperity and adverſity of all, which alone can confer a real value on ſocial life. Let us more and more plainly perceive and properly reſpect that worth, and behave in regard to it as is agreeable to thy will and to our appointment. By conſtantly obeying the laws of juſtice and humanity, and ſteadily adhering to truth and integrity; by the mutual exerciſe of honour and equity, kindneſs and gentleneſs, candour and forbearance; may we and all our fellow-creatures, enjoy the bleſſings of ſociety in this life, and be trained up for the participation of endleſs felicity in the life to come! Bleſs to this end the reflections we are now about to begin on that ſubject. Let us thoroughly comprehend the leſſons of wiſdom that are to be delivered to us, impartially apply them to ourſelves, and make a faithful uſe of them in our future conduct. For theſe bleſſings we implore thee, fully truſting in the promiſes given us by Jeſus, and, as his followers,

thus further in his name and words with filial confidence addreſs thee: Our father, &c.

EPHES. V. 15, 16.

See then that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.

SOME comforts of life there are, univerſally known, eſteemed, admired, and uſed, and in the uſe whereof every one finds pleaſure and profit, to the uſe whereof therefore none need to be ſtimulated or encouraged, and yet which require a certain recommendation if we would perceive their entire value, uſe them in the beſt manner, and obtain as much pleaſure and profit from them as they are calculated to afford. Of this kind undoubtedly is ſocial life. Who does not know and feel that man is formed for intercourſe with his brethren, for communicating to them of what he is and has, for the exchange of his thoughts and ſentiments with theirs? Who has not taſted the pleaſures and joys of ſocial life, and been charmed with the ſweets of them? Who does not prefer it to abſolute and conſtant ſolitude? Who then does not find in himſelf ſufficient impulſe to the uſe and enjoyment of it? How ſeldom is it neceſſary comparatively ſpeaking to caution people againſt too vehement a propenſity to retirement, or to exhort them to go into company,

in the ordinary ſenſe of the word! How much more eaſily, and how much more frequently, upon the whole, do we run into the extreme on this ſide than on the other!

But whether this ſociableneſs is and procures to us all that it might be and procure? Whether we prize and affect it, not merely from blind impulſe, not merely to fly from ourſelves, not merely for following the prevailing faſhion, but on plain and acknowledged principles? Whether we underſtand and feel what it is that gives it its really great value? And whether it is of that value to us, or affords us all thoſe ſatisfactions and advantages, which we may ſeek in it and expect from it? Theſe are matters whereon, notwithſtanding the univerſally ſtrong propenſity to ſocial life, perhaps but few people ever reflect, and in regard to which probably but few are able to give themſelves a ſatisfactory account. Man is a ſocial being, ſince he naturally poſſeſſes diſpoſitions and capacities for ſociety, and finds pleaſure in it; ſince he hears ſociableneſs praiſed, and readily complies with the faſhion that is moſt prevalent at certain times and among particular people. But, whether he be ſocial in the beſt and moſt honourable manner to the wiſe and virtuous man, to the chriſtian, and reap from his ſociable turn the greateſt utility poſſible, the moſt harmleſs and moſt noble pleaſures, about this he too ſeldom concerns himſelf; and hence it is that this very ſocialneſs is ſo often irkſome, even to its admirers and encomiaſts,

and

and ſo ſeldom comes up to their expectations. My deſign at preſent is to give you a few directions in reflecting on ſociableneſs, towards a ſounder judgment and a better uſe of it. Accordingly, we will inveſtigate together the value of ſocial life.

For more accurately aſcertaining it, we ſhall have two queſtions to anſwer. The firſt is: How muſt ſocial life be managed in order to render it of a certain value? The other: What gives it this value, or, wherein conſiſts the value of it?

Theſe inveſtigations will teach us how we are to walk circumſpectly, according to the apoſtolical exhortation in our text, and not to behave as fools in regard of ſocial life, but as wiſe, adapting ourſelves to times or circumſtances, and making the beſt uſe of both.

Sociableneſs, my pious hearers, is always better than unſociableneſs; a defective uſe of this natural impulſe, or this propenſity founded in education and improved by intercourſe, is better than the total diſuſe of it. But all ſociableneſs is not rational and chriſtian, every kind of ſocial life is not of great value. Neither all ſociableneſs nor every kind of ſocial life is able to procure us laſting advantage and real pleaſure. Principally, by the abſence and avoidance of ſeveral defects and imperfections; principally by the preſence and the united activity of ſeveral good properties and virtues, does ſocial life become and afford what it may and ought to be and afford; by this means does it principally acquire that

value which renders it worthy of our high eſteem and participation. And what are then the good properties, the virtues, we are to bring with us into ſocial life and there exerciſe; what the faults we have to avoid, if we would have it of great value to us?

Honeſty and openneſs of heart is the firſt good property, the firſt virtue we ſhould introduce with us and exerciſe in ſocial life; deſtitution of all reſtraint and all circumſpection, is on the other hand the firſt fault we ſhould avoid, and therewith the groſſneſs which is its inſeparable attendant. To be ſociable implies to communicate to one another our thoughts, our ſentiments, to compare together our opinions and views, to barter them againſt each other, and to rectify and improve them by each other. Would you reap this benefit from it, my pious hearers? Then muſt truth be in your diſcourſes, in your geſtures, in your looks, in the tone of your voice, and in your whole carriage and behaviour; then muſt you actually think and feel what you pretend to think and to feel, be that in reality for which you are deſirous to be taken. Then muſt you therefore not lock up your thoughts within your own breaſts, and not reject every reflection and ſentiment, every opinion which is not yet marked with the ſtamp of the mode, or the prevailing faſhion of the day, and is not thoroughly and univerſally current; then muſt you not ſeduloufly ſtrive to conceal yourſelf from others; not torment yourſelf with that heſitation that kills all the vivacity and ſprightlineſs

neſs of converſation, at every word you utter, every ſentiment that ariſes in your boſom, every feature of your face, every geſture of your body, as if you were afraid of betraying the true ſtate of your mind; then muſt you neither regard ſocial life as an intercourſe of impoſtures, nor uſe it as a ſchool of diſſimulation. — This would not be a fair, honourable and obliging commutation of what we are and have, but an artful, and fraudulent intercourſe, impoſing upon others what we are not and do not poſſeſs, and yet would appear to be and to have. By this means ſocial life would be turned into a low farce; and what value could it then be of to thinking and ſenſible men?

Beware however of imagining that honeſty and frankneſs are incompatible with circumſpection and prudence. Though you communicate freely and honeſtly with others, you have no need on that account to repoſe a blind confidence in all you meet; to diſcloſe to every one the inmoſt thoughts and ſentiments of your heart. Though you do not diſſemble, do not give yourſelf out for better than you are, you are not therefore unneceſſarily to reveal all your infirmities and failings. Though you ſay to others nothing but what you think and feel, you need not therefore directly tell everybody whatever you think and whatever you feel. Though you ſhun the anxiety of exceſſive ſcrupuloſity about whatever you ſay and do, you need not therefore ſpeak and act without prudence and circumſpection.

Otherwiſe you will injure many, give offence to many, keep numbers of weak but well-intentioned perſons aloof from you, prevent many good deſigns, but not yet ripe for execution, from coming to effect, cauſe the truth to be ſuſpected which is not comprehenſible to everybody, and bring contempt on your ill-timed expreſſions of ſentiment. Your frankneſs will become folly, and your ſincerity degenerate into rudeneſs.

The uſe of a generous freedom is another good property, another virtue, which we ſhould take with us and diſplay in ſocial life; abſolute licentiouſneſs and effrontery on the other hand is another fault we ſhould avoid. Would you run no riſk of finding ſocial life burdenſome to you; would you have it to be not ſo much labour and toil as refreſhment and recreation: then by all means you ſhould breathe freely, think freely, judge freely, act freely; you ſhould venture, in moſt caſes, to follow your own innocent humour and your irreproachable inclinations; you ſhould not ſcruple to appear what you are, and to do what you find agreeable; you ſhould not think yourſelf bound to comply with the ſelf-conceit and the humour of others, to model yourſelf by other perſons in all things, and abſolutely to ſay and to do nothing but what has been heretofore received and tranſmitted down, or what everybody ſays and does. This would be introducing an inſipid uniformity and an oppreſſive languor into ſocial life.

But

But on the other ſide if you would have it as little burdenſome and diſagreeable to your company as to yourſelf; then you muſt not pretend to preſide alone, not conſtantly lay down the law, not always aſſume the right to determine and controul the amuſements and affairs and connections of others; you ſhould allow others the ſame liberty you uſe yourſelf and they allow, make them the ſame little ſacrifices of complaiſance and indulgence which they at other times make you; and therefore interchangeably direct and obey, now follow others, then be followed. In ſhort, you muſt ſet bounds to the uſe of your liberty, whenever it would be injurious to others, or they might reaſonably take offence at it; particularly whenever it might have a tendency to lead the younger members of ſociety into error or ſin. The unlimited uſe of one's liberty in ſocial intercourſe is criminal licentiouſneſs, is actual tyranny and diſguſting arrogance.

Graceful, polite and agreeable manners are a third requiſite which we ſhould carry into ſocial life, and attend to the obſervance of; artificial conſtraint on the contrary and a ſtiff formal carriage, is a third fault we are to avoid; and even the chriſtian, who in every reſpect ought to be the moſt accompliſhed as well as the beſt of men, ſhould not imagine that matters of this kind are indifferent to him, or unworthy of his attention. To be agreeable to others, and even to pleaſe by the exterior, is a purpoſe of ſocial life, and one of the principal ſources of the pleaſures

pleaſures it procures us. The eye muſt not there be hurt by anything repulſive and ſhocking in mien, geſtures, or in apparel; no harſh, diſcordant, ſhrieking tones muſt grate upon the ear; the taſte for the beautiful muſt be ſatisfied and entertained, by the natural, the becoming, the proper, the captivating, in the figure, the poſture, the voice, the garments, and the whole demeanor. Would you, my pious hearers, attain and promote theſe views; adorn your perſons, but overload them not with borrowed ornaments: follow the faſhion ſo far as is conſiſtent with propriety and a cultivated taſte; but run not into the extravagant or ridiculous; let a graceful eaſe and a noble freedom, not an artificial formality, a childiſh levity, or an offenſive ferocity, be the rule of your movements and outward appearance. Let the tone of your voice be natural and true and ſoft, and ſuitably modulated to the ſubject of your diſcourſe, but never ſo as to become inaudible by an exceſſive modeſty, or diſguſting by an affected ſuavity: ſtudy to acquire elegant and complacent manners, but let them be *your own*, and not a cloſe, ſervile, and thereby a ridiculous imitation of extraneous behaviour. Whatever relates to decorum and outward addreſs ſhould not be the effect of affectation and grimace, but the genuine expreſſion of an inward ſenſe of the beautiful and becoming, and receive animation from that ſentiment alone; and even the outward deportment, the very garb of wiſdom and virtue, ſhould add a

luſtre

luſtre to intrinſic worth, and thus render it more amiable.

Benevolence and philanthropy is a fourth good property, a fourth virtue, which we ſhould carry with us and practiſe in ſocial life; envy and coldneſs on the other hand, or flattery and affected ſenſibility, compoſe a fourth claſs of the faults we ſhould there avoid. And in fact, my pious hearers, would you receive pleaſure from the countenance of your brethren and from your converſe with them; you muſt rejoice in their welfare and proſperity. Otherwiſe every better quality you perceive in them, every mark of approbation conferred on them by others, every praiſe they obtain muſt give you uneaſineſs. Is it expedient that your intercourſe with them ſhould be neither irkſome nor painful, would you ſupport it with pleaſure, you muſt take an intereſt in all that relates to them; you ſhould not be indifferent to whatever befalls them, whether good or bad; you muſt rejoice with the joyful and weep with the weeping. Would you procure ſuſtenance and employment for your heart by your converſe with others: you muſt expand it to the feelings of humanity and friendſhip; you muſt let it be animated by correſpondent eſtimation and love; ſelf-intereſt, ſelf-love, miſanthropy muſt be eradicated from it. Coldneſs, indifferency, inſenſibility, envy, hatred, are the death of all ſocial pleaſures; are what conſtantly more or leſs impair and weaken theſe ſatisfactions, and are the cauſes

cauſes that diſguſt and diſpleaſure and languor ſo often prevail in ſociety.

But in avoiding theſe miſtakes, take care not to boaſt of diſpoſitions which are foreign to you, or to teſtify a ſenſibility which you do not poſſeſs. Seek not to compenſate the defects of your benevolence and affection by the baſe arts of flattery. Put not on the ſemblances of gladneſs or ſorrow, while your heart neither feels the one nor the other. Accoſt not with pretended friendſhip thoſe from whom your heart is averſe. Feign not to ſhed tears of compaſſion, of ſympathy, of joy, or of tenderneſs. Be not laviſh in particular proteſtations of friendſhip to any man that is not the friend of your ſoul, the confident of your heart. Rarely can artifice conceal the defects of nature and the want of veracity; and people in general would rather you let your coldneſs appear, than be duped by the affectation of a cordial concern. Would you avoid theſe errors, my pious hearers; be chriſtians, for the chriſtian is actuated by unfeigned love; that is the prime motive of all he thinks and ſpeaks and does.

Affability is a fifth good quality, which we ſhould bring and employ in ſocial life; loquacity on the contrary a fifth failing which we ſhould avoid. The affable man entertains, the loquacious confounds. The former ſpeaks with reflection, and ſelects the moſt profitable and agreeable from what he has to ſay: the latter delivers everything that comes

comes into his mind without conſideration or choice, and ſhakes out his wallet of good things and bad, proper and improper, windy conceits and ſtupid dreams, in every man's face he meets. The former actually converſes with others, and hearkens when they ſpeak with the ſame attention he, in his turn, requires from them: the latter is conſtantly talking, never has time to hear, and his perpetual torrent of words ruſhes over all, like a deluge, depriving the intelligent of the deſire and the opportunity to ſpeak, and both the wiſe and the unwiſe of all power to hear. The former in ſhort, knows the fit time for holding his tongue, and is not aſhamed of his ſilence: the other had rather have recourſe to idle reports, or ſlander, or lies, than allow himſelf to be robbed of the imaginary honour of poſſeſſing an inexhauſtible fund of entertainment.

Strive therefore to maintain and heighten the pleaſures of ſociety by a rational and diſcreet affability; but do not heedleſsly ſpoil them by loquacity. Learn to hear as well as to ſpeak. Diſtinguiſh yourſelf more by the truth, the juſtneſs, the moral goodneſs of what you ſay, by the delicacy of your remarks, and the fit manner in which you produce them, than by the redundant verboſity, and ſtupifying vehemence of your ſpeech. Let your diſcourſes be ſeaſoned with ſalt, according to the precept of the apoſtle; let them be always inoffenſive, conducive to edification, and conſtantly ſo ordered, that

that the claims of truth, of virtue, of religion, of chriſtianity, be never infringed. Be not diſtreſſed in thoſe moments when the vivacity of converſation gives place to profound ſilence, frequently unavoidable, and often ſo ſalutary to the ſupport and improvement of reflection. Rather ſubmit to the reproach of unſociableneſs, or of poverty in materials of entertainment, than eſcape this reproach at the expenſe of truth or humanity, of virtue or decorum.

Mirth, harmleſs, temperate mirth, is a ſixth good quality which we ſhould carry with us into ſocial life, and put in practice there; diſſolute merriment, on the other hand, and extravagant jollity, is a ſixth fault we have to avoid. The former, decent mirth, recreates and confirms both the health of the mind and that of the body; it is really recreation; is even worthy of the wiſe man and the chriſtian; and gives to whatever is ſpoken or tranſacted an agreeable aſpect, a heightened value: the other, diſſolute mirth, enervates and perplexes the mind, frequently diſtorts the body, commonly debaſes the character, excludes every finer and more generous ſatisfaction, corrupts the taſte, and leaves nothing behind but confuſion and wild uproar.

Avoid theſe faults, and acquire theſe good qualities, if you would give and receive much real pleaſure in ſocial life. Let ſerenity accompany you in the ſociety of your brethren; let gaiety and cheerfulneſs

cheerfulneſs animate you there; let inoffenſive wit and harmleſs raillery ſeaſon your converſation; enjoy legitimate and innoxious mirth. But enjoy them with prudent moderation. Beware of every thing that benumbs your reaſon, that deprives you of the conſciouſneſs of yourſelf and the reſpect that is due to others, of everything that diſtreſſes others or degrades them in their own eyes, of everything that is in oppoſition to the dignity of the man and the chriſtian. Rejoice in the Lord alway; that is, conſtantly ſo as becomes a chriſtian. Only that cheerfulneſs which is conſiſtent with the thoughts of God and your duty, and which you will reflect upon with pleaſure in the ſilence of retirement, or at leaſt in your hours of lonely meditation will not be a cauſe of regret; only this cheerfulneſs ſhould be approved, ſought after, enjoyed and with all diligence cultivated by you.

If, my pious hearers, we take with us theſe good qualities, theſe virtues, into ſocial life, and exerciſe them there, at the ſame time avoiding their oppoſite defects; if therefore ſincerity and frankneſs, but not indiſcretion and rudeneſs; dignified freedom, but not licentiouſneſs and arrogance; graceful, refined, and agreeable manners, but not foppery, affectation and incivility; benevolence and philanthropy, but not coldneſs and jealouſy, or flattery and artificial ſenſibility; affability but not garrulity; mirth, but not licentiouſneſs; prevail in ſocial life: then certainly it has a great value,

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it then procures us complete and diverſified pleaſures, ſolid and laſting utility. However, the more particular ſtatement of the pleaſures and benefits ariſing from ſociability, and the arrangement of them in their proper light, as the matter is ſo copious, we muſt defer to another opportunity. In the mean time, we will juſt draw a few inferences from what has been already remarked.

Collect from the foregoing cauſes, how it happens that ſociety is ſo often irkſome to you; that it ſo ſeldom anſwers you expectations; that you ſo frequently go into company, as it were againſt your inclination; and much oftener leave it, with a heart diſſatisfied or totally empty. Either you yourſelf are deficient in thoſe good qualities and virtues, to which ſocial life is indebted for all its value, or you miſs them in others. Either you ſuffer yourſelf to be overtaken and beguiled by thoſe failings, which diminiſh or deſtroy the pleaſures of ſociety, or you are obliged to experience the diſagreeable effects of them in others. More carefully combat or avoid theſe failings, more ſtrenuouſly ſtrive to acquire thoſe good qualities and virtues, and exerciſe yourſelf in the practice of them; ſo will the principal cauſes of languor and diſguſt be certainly baniſhed from your converſe with others, and that ſource of ſatisfaction and pleaſure will be open to your uſe.

Learn farther from what has been obſerved, that, although, to the beſt uſe and moſt ſolid enjoyment

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of ſocial life, outward appearance, genteel and agreeable manners, and what is only to be acquired by frequenting polite circles, are very requiſite; yet that likewiſe theſe things do not conſtitute the ſole, nor even the principal requiſites; but that moſt depends on good moral qualities, on real virtues, on chriſtian diſpoſitions, on actual and diſtinguiſhed merit both of mind and heart. Thence conclude, that he who comes to his brethren with an empty head and a cold heart, has no reaſon to expect either pleaſure or profit from his intercourſe with them, and that he who brings with him no diſpoſition for harmleſs elegant gaiety, can likewiſe have no pretenſions to the enjoyment of ſuch ſatisfactions, and has no right to complain of the want of them. Forget not, that the ſatisfactions and pleaſures of ſocial life conſiſt in the mutual interchange and communication of what each perſon poſſeſſes and knows that is eminently beautiful, good, and agreeable; that they depend on a reciprocal giving and receiving; and that he who has nothing, or but little, to give, is only capable of receiving as little, and has no right to demand any more. The greater ſtock therefore, the more wealth in good thoughts, ſentiments, opinions, perceptions, various kinds of knowledge, views and accompliſhments, you take with you; ſo much the more opportunity and means will you meet with for bartering your ſtores againſt the commodities that others poſſeſs, and at the ſame time improve and augment your ſtock.

Learn thirdly from what has been ſaid, that the wiſe, the virtuous man, the real chriſtian, whether in ſociety or ſolitude, is in his proper place; that he conſtantly carries about him the moſt copious ſources of pleaſure, which he imparts to others and enjoys himſelf; that he everywhere encounters the leaſt hazard of either doing or ſuffering injuries, of affronting others or of being affronted by them; that he is everywhere eminently good and eminently happy: and that he has always the means at hand, in his reflecting mind, his honeſt heart, and his contented diſpoſition, of rendering very indifferent, and in many reſpects diſagreeable company, pretty tolerable. His well trained mind diſcovers even there more materials for thought, his benevolent and humane heart finds more of the beautiful and the good, overlooks and excuſes more failings and follies, enjoys every pleaſure and ſatisfaction in greater purity and perfection; and his temperate deſires, his modeſt pretenſions, are far more eaſily ſatisfied, than if he brought with him into company a vacant head, a drowzy mind, an auſtere or envious eye, a moroſe, peeviſh, diſcontented heart, or ungoverned appetites and proud pretenſions.

Learn laſtly, my pious hearers, that ſolitary and ſocial life ſhould be mutually interchanged for each other, if we would receive the greateſt poſſible advantage from both, and that the ſocial alone, without the ſolitary life, can have no great value. In the ſilence of ſolitude we ſhould qualify ourſelves

for the ſatisfactions and pleaſures of ſociety. There we ſhould learn to think judiciouſly in the chriſtian ſenſe of the term, if we would here ſpeak rationally and agreeably. We ſhould there collect and adjuſt the knowledge, acquire the virtues and the good qualities we here are to uſe, and by which we are to merit eſteem and approbation and love. There we ſhould form our taſte to the beautiful and good, which we are here to cheriſh and apply. We ſhould there procure our heart that peace, and repleniſh it with thoſe benevolent, generous ſentiments and diſpoſitions, which we find ſo neceſſary here, and afford ſo much ſatisfaction and delight both to ourſelves and to others. We ſhould there arm ourſelves againſt the aſſaults and temptations which may here lead us into error or plunge us into guilt. Combine them therefore together, and labour in ſolitude at the cultivation of your underſtanding and the improvement of your moral ſtate, with ſo much the more zeal, as it is ſo neceſſary to you in ſocial life, that you may be ſo much the more uſeful and agreeable to others, and that you may reap again in return more profit and ſatisfaction from your intercourſe with them. Yes, believe me, my dear friends, wiſdom and virtue and piety, are and continue in all places, at all times, in all circumſtances, in domeſtic and in ſocial, as well as in ſolitary life, the beſt, the ſureſt guides of man, the moſt ſolid baſis of his ſatisfaction, the richeſt, the only inexhauſtible ſources of his pleaſure and his happineſs.

SERMON XXIX.

The Value of Social Life, continued.

GOD, the numberleſs ſtreams of bleſſings, which are continually flowing everywhere around us abundantly prove, that thou art the only original fountain of life and happineſs. They illuſtrate and diſplay thine unſearchable greatneſs, thine unerring wiſdom, and thy diffuſive and inexhauſtible goodneſs. We acknowledge and worſhip thee, the maker and the lord of all. We revere the power which weighed the world's foundations, which formed and which continually upholds the earth and the heavens and all worlds. We admire the wiſdom, which at firſt eſtabliſhed the order of nature, and which conſtantly directs the vaſt concerns of the univerſe. We adore and love the goodneſs which is manifeſted in all thy works, and which makes all thy creatures happy. We rejoice in the felicity of thy numerous offspring; and, as children of thy family, we unite with all our brethren, to give thanks unto thee our common parent, for all

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thy mercies. But ah, how much more might we be and afford the one to the other than we actually are and do! How much more contented and cheerful and happy might we here live together than it commonly happens! How much farther proceed in virtue and perfection! What incitement, what means and opportunities to that end haſt thou granted us in ſocial life! Every kind office we reciprocally perform, every buſineſs that we purſue in common, and every pleaſure that we commonly enjoy, might and ſhould at the ſame time be an exerciſe in virtue and an approximation to perfection; every aſſiſtance we afford our brethren, every ſatisfaction we procure them, at the ſame time be a benefit and a bleſſing to ourſelves! Yes, if we ſo much more eſteemed each other as we might and ſhould, ſo much more loved each other, ſo much more readily ſerved each other, ſo much more cloſely blended our wants and buſineſſes and pleaſures together; if ſincerity and affection accompanied us in every ſociety, there animated all our diſcourſes and actions; if we there looked not merely at our own things, but alſo and ſtill more on the things of others, and our thoughts and ſentiments were conſtantly in uniſon with our words and deeds: what a ſource of virtue and happineſs would ſocial life be to us! What a preparative to that better ſuperior life, that will unite all wiſe and good perſons together, that kingdom of reaſon and virtue to come! God, do thou teach

us then properly to underſtand and to uſe our advantages. Grant us ſtill more and more to be kindly affectioned one to another. Inſpire into us all a conſtantly greater avidity and zeal to ſerve and to aſſiſt each other, and to promote our reciprocal happineſs to the utmoſt of our power. Grant that we way be ever taking a greater intereſt in the concerns and fortunes of our brethren, ſo as cordially to rejoice with them that rejoice and to weep with them that weep. Let our converſe with each other be conſtantly more edifying, always more uſeful, and the ſatisfactions we mutually enjoy, be conſtantly more innocent, more honourable and fruitful in good works. Oh that in this reſpect the ſpirit of chriſtianity might animate and guide us, and dignify all that we think and do! Bleſs to this end the conſiderations in which we are now to be employed, and hear our prayer through Jeſus Chriſt, our lord, in whoſe name we further implore thee, ſaying: Our father, &c.

EPHES. v. 15, 16.

See that ye walk circumſpectly, not as fools, but as wiſe, redeeming the time, becauſe the days are evil.

THAT ſocial life has a particular value, that it is good and deſirable, is what no one doubts; of this, my pious hearers, our own experience aſſures

aſſures us. But how it is to be ordered, what we are to obſerve, and what avoid in it, if we deſire it to be of great value: and what peculiarly gives it this value: are queſtions we do not often enough conſider, though the ſolution of them is of the utmoſt importance in the uſe and enjoyment of it. The former of theſe queſtions I have anſwered in my preceding diſcourſe. We thence ſaw what good qualities, what virtues, we are to bring with us into ſocial life, and there employ, and at the ſame time what faults we ſhould avoid, if we deſire it to afford us real pleaſure and ſolid advantage. It muſt be namely honeſty and openneſs of heart, but not rudeneſs; generous freedom, but not licentiouſneſs and arrogance; polite, elegant, engaging manners, but not foppiſhneſs or formal and affected behaviour; it muſt be benevolence and philanthropy, but not coldneſs and jealouſy, not flattery, not artificial ſenſibility; it muſt be rational and diſcreet affability, but not loquacity; innocent mirth, but not licentiouſneſs and diſſolute revelry; that muſt prevail in ſocial life, in order that it may procure us pleaſure no leſs diverſified than pure, profit no leſs durable than real.

The other queſtion ſtill remaining to be anſwered is, What confers this value on ſocial life? Wherein does it conſiſt? What is the utility, what are the pleaſures it procures us? To reply expreſsly to this queſtion is the object of my preſent diſcourſe. Happy for him who ſhall learn from it more juſtly

to prize and more circumſpectly to uſe, the value of the riches it poſſeſſes, the means of improvement and happineſs it offers!

Social life is firſt the moſt natural and the moſt abundant ſource of the knowledge of mankind. And, without the diſcrimination of characters, we can neither be ſo uſeful to our brethren nor they to us, as our obligations and our common intereſt require. The moraliſt, who in the ſilence of retirement reflects upon mankind, and at the ſame time narrowly obſerves himſelf, may certainly make great progreſs in the knowledge of human nature: he may make acute and juſt remarks on the capacities and powers of the human intellect, on the proceſs and connection of its ideas, on its preſent and future deſtination, on human paſſions, prejudices, virtues and vices; he may inveſtigate the motives of human actions, and weigh the intrinſic value of their ſentiments and actions. But it is only in intercourſe with them, it is only in ſocial life, that he will learn to apply the principles and rules by which he judges of mankind, to a thouſand particular perſons and occurrences, and put their preciſion to the proof. There will he firſt learn to judge of the infinite variety of human opinions, and manners, of human diſpoſitions and tempers. There he perceives the lineaments of human nature multiplied and diverſified a thouſand ways, ſees the ſeveral faculties of the human mind as variouſly exerted; the human propenſities and paſſions ſhewing themſelves under

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the moſt variegated and diſſimilar aſpects, and producing as numerous and different effects. There will he find combinations and mixtures of ſtrength and weakneſs, of wiſdom and folly, of good and bad qualities, of virtues and defects, which, remote from the actual world, he would ſcarcely have thought poſſible. And how much muſt this extend and correct his knowledge of mankind! How many phænomena in the moral world will it elucidate, how many myſteries unravel, which before were inexplicable to him, and which by mere meditation he could never have ſolved!

In ſociety we learn, not only to know mankind in general, but in particular thoſe individuals among whom we live, and with whom we are obliged to aſſociate, our acquaintance, our fellow-citizens, our friends, every perſon with whom we are connected by buſineſs, by office and employment, and by ordinary affairs. There, on numberleſs occaſions, their principles, their prejudices, their errors, their propenſities, their paſſions, their ſound and their weak ſide, diſcover themſelves to us by degrees. There we learn to know the meaſure of their intelligence, the range of their obſervation, their habits of life, the degree of their ſtrength or their weakneſs, the avenues to their heart, and the influence which certain perſons or things have over them. There we may conſequently learn, how far we may rely upon them, or whether rely upon them at all, truſt

truſt ourſelves to them or not, what we have and what we have not to expect from them.

And how profitable, how neceſſary to us is this knowledge, if we would neither deal unjuſtly by ourſelves or others, require neither too much nor too little of any, injure none by ungrounded diſtruſt, nor by too much confidence tempt or perplex them, if we would proſecute our affairs with prudence and ſucceſs, properly diſcharge our duty to every man, make uſe of others to promote our deſigns, and in return contribute our means to the advancement of theirs, afford others the moſt uſeful ſervices, and obtain ſimilar ſervices from them! From how many miſtakes and treſpaſſes ſhould we be ſaved by ſuch a knowledge of mankind! How much more ſpeedily and ſecurely in numberleſs caſes ſhould we gain our ends! How much more certainly know where to be firm, and where to concede; when we ſhould go ſtrait forward, and where reach our aim by a circuitous way; what remonſtrances we ſhould here moſt ſucceſsfully employ, what arguments there; how take in hand ſuch a caſe, how manage ſuch a buſineſs, how deal with ſuch a perſon, how behave in ſuch an emergency! With how much greater eaſe and ſafety diſcharge our obligations on one hand, and on the other promote our own lawful and honeſt deſigns! How much more good be able to perform, and how much more to enjoy! And muſt not then the ſocial life that

enables

enables us to acquire this knowledge of mankind be of great value to us?

Yes, certainly great is its value! For, at the ſame time that it improves us in the knowledge of mankind, it in the ſecond place ſupplies us with the moſt excellent means of exerciſing our mental faculties, of enlarging the ſphere of our views, of rectifying and bringing into action the knowledge we have already acquired, and of increaſing it with new diſcoveries. If we wiſh to communicate our opinion on any ſubject to the ſatisfaction of others: we muſt repreſent the caſe at the ſame time in a more perſpicuous method to ourſelves, and more diſtinctly particularize our conceptions of it, than we commonly do when we reflect upon them for ourſelves alone. If we would hearken to others with intelligence, perfectly underſtand them, and apprehend their opinions, their judgments on any ſubject with full conviction, or refute them with ſolid arguments: then muſt we more ſtrenuouſly exert our attention, and more ſtrictly inveſtigate the matter, than if we were to determine upon it merely for ourſelves from ſenſations that may be at once imperfect and obſcure. If we would accompany others in their train of ideas, or agree with them in their arguments: we muſt place ourſelves as it were in the orbit of their view, and thus alter or enlarge our own. Are we deſirous that others ſhould readily communicate their ideas to us: we ſhould let them ſee that we perceive the truth and juſtneſs of them, and ſhould

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repay them with ſome equivalent thoughts of our own. Generally ſpeaking, in ſocial life we barter our experiences, our perceptions, our knowledge, againſt thoſe of others, and each is a gainer by this ſpecies of traffic, not excepting even him who gives far more than he receives; becauſe we can never teach others, without learning ourſelves, and becauſe every perſon in his ſituation and circumſtances has ſeen much, heard much, experienced much, conſidered much, that another in a different ſituation, and other circumſtances, could not have ſeen, not have heard, not have experienced, not have conceived. We there learn to ſee things on new ſides, unobſerved by us before, in new connections and different analogies; learn to judge of them more liberally, and therefore with leſs partiality and injuſtice. We there meet with opportunities of freeing ourſelves from numberleſs prejudices againſt certain ſtations, or buſineſſes, or pleaſures, or habits of life, or other objects, by which ſuch as live at too great a diſtance from the world are fettered and miſled; we learn to compare more things together, to comprehend more and to ſurvey more objects at once, and thus likewiſe to judge more juſtly of the whole.

And how frequently, in ſocial life, is one intellect awakened and ſtimulated by another! How often is one light kindled by another, one brilliant thought elicited by another! How oft is a vivid ray of light, a ſpark of celeſtial fire, darted into a mind where

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nay, which ſo often outweighs them; and how much better diſpoſed muſt this render us to forbear and to pardon one another in chriſtian love, and to admoniſh one another in meekneſs of ſpirit!

By ſocial life we acquire more ſocial diſpoſitions, tranſact more ſocial affairs, enjoy more ſocial pleaſures and ſatisfactions, encourage ourſelves more by common proſpects and expectations; and by all this we are undoubtedly brought much cloſer together, into ſtricter and more intimate connections, and are therefore, if we have good tempers and good manners, far more ready to ſerve and aſſiſt one another, and to promote our mutual happineſs. To the calls of humanity, to the arguments of religion and chriſtianity, are there ſuperadded the particular motives of acquaintance and frequent intercourſe, the motives of friendſhip, the motive of ſocial entertainments, and the common honour of ſociety; and how much more muſt the combined force of all theſe arguments and motives act upon the man who does not harden his heart againſt them, than if he were reduced barely to follow the general and cold precepts of reaſon!

In ſocial life we have fourthly various opportunities for exerciſing ourſelves in many good diſpoſitions and virtues; and whatever confirms us in good diſpoſitions and induces us to practiſe the virtues, is indiſputably of very great value. In the ſtillneſs of retirement I certainly may and ſhould regulate the affections of my heart, give them all their proper direction,

direction, kindle and inflame my love for whatever is true and beautiful and good; that is, to virtue. But only in ſocial life, in converſe with my brethren, can I confirm my affections in this good direction, and ſettle my love of truth, of moral beauty, of virtue, by a ready and faithful obedience to its precepts. Good ſentiments that remain locked up in the heart, virtues that are never produced in action, can poſſeſs no ſignal value, but may eaſily appear better and greater than they really are. In ſocial life they are put to the teſt; there we are ſummoned to bring them forth; there, in the practice of them, we meet with obſtacles to vanquiſh, difficulties to conquer, and oppoſitions to encounter; and the oftener we ſuſtain theſe trials, obey theſe ſummons, and come off victorious, or at leaſt maintain our ground, the better and more virtuous ſhall we be, and the more ſafely may we rely on our virtue.

And how various are the opportunities thus afforded us in ſocial life! Here are weak brethren, whom I may eaſily offend, and who therefore exerciſe me in circumſpection in my diſcourſes and opinions: there are numberleſs defects and failings, which call for my little forgiveneſſes, my patience and candour. Here I perceive eminent qualities of mind and heart, the advantages of perſon, of ſtation, of fortune, which raiſe others above me, and which I ſhould reſpect and admire without jealouſy or envy, but with inward ſatisfaction, with cordial delight: there I diſtinguiſh myſelf from others by ſimilar ad-

vantages, receive approbation from others, conciliate their affection, am praiſed by them; and this eſteem and affection ſhould neither ſubject me to a falſe humility, nor lead me into fooliſh pride. Here I may be ſurpriſed into diſpleaſure, betrayed into anger, into violence, or ill-humour, and ſhould learn from thence to govern myſelf: there irregular deſires and concupiſcence may be excited in me, which I ſhould encounter and ſubdue. Here I may be called upon to ſpeak with undaunted reſolution in ſome good cauſe, to be aſhamed of the truth before no man, to plead the cauſe of one unjuſtly accuſed or calumniated, without reſpect of perſons: there will prudence and humanity impoſe an uninterrupted ſilence on me, bidding me repreſs any ſally of wit, though never ſo happy, any jeſt, though never ſo pleaſant, which may offend or injure another. Here I meet with a man of an obſtinate temper, to whom I muſt ſubmit for the ſake of peace; there a quarrelſome perſon, whoſe paſſion I muſt reſtrain. Here ſome great or proud man, before whom I ſhall not cringe; and there a baſhful, timid man, whom I muſt not deſpiſe or confound. Here a man of conſpicuous merit, whom I ſhall reſpect, though deſtitute of rank or ſtation; there an injurious, a contemptible perſon, who, with all his pomp and magnificence, I ſhall not flatter. Here I have an opportunity to let another ſhine when I might ſhine myſelf: there an opportunity to ſacrifice my own pleaſure and conveniency to the pleaſure and conve-

niency of another, and thus to exercise myself in self-denial and magnanimity. And who can reckon up all the opportunities and occasions that present themselves in social life for confirming us in some good disposition, for exercising ourselves in some virtue, for resisting and weakening some bad propensity, and thereby for promoting our intrinsic, our spiritual perfection? Certainly he who makes his improvement the leading object of his concern, will find opportunities and incentives to it in every company, in his intercourse with every person.

No less numerous are fifthly, my pious hearers, the opportunities afforded us by social life for being useful to others in various ways; and this also must give it a great value in the eyes of the benevolent and affectionate man. And in reality, my dear friends, how vast a multiplicity of services may we there render to each other, and thus advance our mutual interests! And how important are they frequently in their consequences! We are there enabled, by instructive, entertaining, familiar discourse, to free one person from an error, to clear up some doubt to another, and to remove from a third some scruple that gave him uneasiness, conduct a fourth into the track of truth, and furnish him with an elucidation of matters it highly concerned him to know. There may we often raise the dejected, encourage the timorous, cheer the desponding, advise the wanderer, give resolution to the irresolute, information to the ignorant, warmth to the cold, and fresh vi-

gour to the almoſt expiring. There may we often bring the giddy to reflection, the ſlothful to greater diligence, the frail to a ſenſe and abhorrence of their failings, aſſiſt the fallen, and encourage thoſe that are humbled by their fall to a cheerful proſecution of their courſe. There one while, a prudent ſeaſonable hint, at another an affectionate caution, now a friendly intreaty, then a diſcreet reproof, now deſerved praiſe, then a powerful word of comfort, now an encouraging, animated addreſs, then a hearty intereſt in the deſigns, in the fortunes, in the actions of others, may prevent many faults and tranſgreſſions, may ward off many a misfortune, obviate much cauſe of uneaſineſs, reſtrain and abate many a hurtful paſſion, occaſion and reward many a good deed, unite many hearts together, and open to them various ſources of ſatisfaction and happineſs. There often, by the preſence and operation of eminently intelligent and virtuous men, the nobleſt qualities of the human heart are developed, and purpoſes brought to maturity and to effect, which otherwiſe would have remained in the intention alone. And how much may we there effectuate by our example! What influence may we have on others! When they ſee and obſerve the beauty, the complacency, the generoſity, the gentleneſs of virtue, in the lineaments of our face, in our judgments, in our whole deportment; when they perceive the harmony ſubſiſting in all the parts of our conduct, how tranquil, how ſatisfied, how confident

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the enjoyment of a good conſcience and the aſſurance of the divine approbation render us; how cheerful and rational our devotion is; how reſpectable, how amiable, muſt virtue and piety appear to them! what an impreſſion muſt theſe obſervations, this view, make on the good and the bad, on the ſtrong and the weak, on the wavering and the reſolute? What a ſalutary compunction muſt it excite in one, what a generous emulation in another, what firmneſs and perſeverance in a third!

Social life in ſhort, my pious hearers, when properly uſed, is productive of very many innocent and real pleaſures to us. The various advantages it procures us, is already the richeſt and the pureſt ſource of them. This greater knowledge of mankind, this extenſion of our perceptions and range of obſervation, this approximation of our heart and mind to each other, this inward ſenſe of our mutual alliance, this diſcipline in the moſt honourable diſpoſitions and virtues, this opportunity for doing good and promoting happineſs: what pleaſure muſt it procure to the friend of truth, the friend of virtue, the friend of man! And how many other ſources of pleaſure are open to us by the reciprocal confidence, the greater freedom, the natural endeavour to pleaſe, and to preſent ourſelves on the moſt advantageous ſide, the various exertions and proofs of the benevolence of our brethren, the gaiety of converſation, the charms of mirth, the many agreeable occupations and amuſements of our ſenſes and our

truſt ourſelves to them or not, what we have and what we have not to expect from them.

And how profitable, how neceſſary to us is this knowledge, if we would neither deal unjuſtly by ourſelves or others, require neither too much nor too little of any, injure none by ungrounded diſtruſt, nor by too much confidence tempt or perplex them, if we would proſecute our affairs with prudence and ſucceſs, properly diſcharge our duty to every man, make uſe of others to promote our deſigns, and in return contribute our means to the advancement of theirs, afford others the moſt uſeful ſervices, and obtain ſimilar ſervices from them! From how many miſtakes and treſpaſſes ſhould we be ſaved by ſuch a knowledge of mankind! How much more ſpeedily and ſecurely in numberleſs caſes ſhould we gain our ends! How much more certainly know where to be firm, and where to concede; when we ſhould go ſtrait forward, and where reach our aim by a circuitous way; what remonſtrances we ſhould here moſt ſucceſsfully employ, what arguments there; how take in hand ſuch a caſe, how manage ſuch a buſineſs, how deal with ſuch a perſon, how behave in ſuch an emergency! With how much greater eaſe and ſafety diſcharge our obligations on one hand, and on the other promote our own lawful and honeſt deſigns! How much more good be able to perform, and how much more to enjoy! And muſt not then the ſocial life that

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enables us to acquire this knowledge of mankind be of great value to us?

Yes, certainly great is its value! For, at the ſame time that it improves us in the knowledge of mankind, it in the ſecond place ſupplies us with the moſt excellent means of exerciſing our mental faculties, of enlarging the ſphere of our views, of rectifying and bringing into action the knowledge we have already acquired, and of increaſing it with new diſcoveries. If we wiſh to communicate our opinion on any ſubject to the ſatisfaction of others: we muſt repreſent the caſe at the ſame time in a more perſpicuous method to ourſelves, and more diſtinctly particularize our conceptions of it, than we commonly do when we reflect upon them for ourſelves alone. If we would hearken to others with intelligence, perfectly underſtand them, and apprehend their opinions, their judgments on any ſubject with full conviction, or refute them with ſolid arguments: then muſt we more ſtrenuouſly exert our attention, and more ſtrictly inveſtigate the matter, than if we were to determine upon it merely for ourſelves from ſenſations that may be at once imperfect and obſcure. If we would accompany others in their train of ideas, or agree with them in their arguments: we muſt place ourſelves as it were in the orbit of their view, and thus alter or enlarge our own. Are we deſirous that others ſhould readily communicate their ideas to us: we ſhould let them ſee that we perceive the truth and juſtneſs of them, and ſhould

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repay them with ſome equivalent thoughts of our own. Generally ſpeaking, in ſocial life we barter our experiences, our perceptions, our knowledge, againſt thoſe of others, and each is a gainer by this ſpecies of traffic, not excepting even him who gives far more than he receives; becauſe we can never teach others, without learning ourſelves, and becauſe every perſon in his ſituation and circumſtances has ſeen much, heard much, experienced much, conſidered much, that another in a different ſituation, and other circumſtances, could not have ſeen, not have heard, not have experienced, not have conceived. We there learn to ſee things on new ſides, unobſerved by us before, in new connections and different analogies; learn to judge of them more liberally, and therefore with leſs partiality and injuſtice. We there meet with opportunities of freeing ourſelves from numberleſs prejudices againſt certain ſtations, or buſineſſes, or pleaſures, or habits of life, or other objects, by which ſuch as live at too great a diſtance from the world are fettered and miſled; we learn to compare more things together, to comprehend more and to ſurvey more objects at once, and thus likewiſe to judge more juſtly of the whole.

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how copious are the materials we there collect for private reflection, which we may work up afterwards in retirement as our views and wants require! Certainly, if ſolitude be indiſpenſably neceſſary for giving juſtneſs and ſolidity, firmneſs and conſiſtency, to our thoughts; ſocial life is no leſs ſo for adding to the number of their objects, for giving perſpicuity to them, and for rendering them ſerviceable by their proper application.

A third circumſtance which confers a great value on ſocial life is this: by it we are brought nearer together, gain the affection of one another, and learn how to obtain more reciprocal ſatisfaction from each other. When a man lives retired from his fellow-creatures, he is apt to judge too harſhly of them; ſeldom takes much intereſt in what concerns them, and his heart very often retreats from them in proportion as he withdraws himſelf from their ſociety and converſe. Humanity, human affairs, human miſery, human happineſs in general and in the aggregate, are nothing more than barren ideas, frequently mere words, which leave the heart unmoved and cold, unleſs at the ſame time they preſent us with lively images of ſeveral particular perſons who take an intereſt in this humanity, to whom theſe concerns are of conſequence, who groan under this miſery, or rejoice in this happineſs. Theſe ideas only then become impelling motives to generous ſentiments and actions. But this vivacity and this energy they can ſcarcely otherwiſe acquire than by means

means of ſocial life, and the cloſer alliance we thereby contract with our fellow-creatures. There alone we feel how much we all poſſeſs in common; how little one man can diſpenſe with the help of another; of how much value one is to the other; how important this link is of the great chain which entwines and holds them all together. There we mutually diſcover many good qualities, many happy diſpoſitions, many capacities and abilities, various kinds of ſagacity and ingenuity, which we did not ſuſpect in each other; and how greatly muſt this increaſe our reciprocal eſteem and affection! How much honourable ſatisfaction procure us! There we frequently hear individuals of every condition, every age, each ſex, of every ſituation in life, deliver ſuch juſt opinions, expreſs ſuch truly chriſtian ſentiments, and ſee them conduct themſelves ſo prudently, that our mind energetically feels its affinity, and our heart entirely ſympathizes with them; and how cloſely, how intimately muſt this connect us together! How extenſively promote the cauſe of humanity and brotherly love!

In ſocial life we likewiſe learn to think more reaſonably of the weakneſſes, the failings, the aberrations of our fellow-mortals: we learn to conſider them not only in the abſtract but in relation to the particular individual, to the ſituation and circumſtances of that individual; we learn to judge of them by their grounds and occaſions; we learn to compare them with the good that ſo often counterbalances, nay,

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niency of another, and thus to exerciſe myſelf in ſelf-denial and magnanimity. And who can reckon up all the opportunities and occaſions that preſent themſelves in ſocial life for confirming us in ſome good diſpoſition, for exerciſing ourſelves in ſome virtue, for reſiſting and weakening ſome bad propenſity, and thereby for promoting our intrinſic, our ſpiritual perfection? Certainly he who makes his improvement the leading object of his concern, will find opportunities and incentives to it in every company, in his intercourſe with every perſon.

No leſs numerous are fifthly, my pious hearers, the opportunities afforded us by ſocial life for being uſeful to others in various ways; and this alſo muſt give it a great value in the eyes of the benevolent and affectionate man. And in reality, my dear friends, how vaſt a multiplicity of ſervices may we there render to each other, and thus advance our mutual intereſts! And how important are they frequently in their conſequences! We are there enabled, by inſtructive, entertaining, familiar diſcourſe, to free one perſon from an error, to clear up ſome doubt to another, and to remove from a third ſome ſcruple that gave him uneaſineſs, conduct a fourth into the track of truth, and furniſh him with an elucidation of matters it highly concerned him to know. There may we often raiſe the dejected, encourage the timorous, cheer the deſponding, adviſe the wanderer, give reſolution to the irreſolute, information to the ignorant, warmth to the cold, and freſh vi-

gour to the almoſt expiring. There may we often bring the giddy to reflection, the ſlothful to greater diligence, the frail to a ſenſe and abhorrence of their failings, aſſiſt the fallen, and encourage thoſe that are humbled by their fall to a cheerful proſecution of their courſe. There one while, a prudent ſeaſonable hint, at another an affectionate caution, now a friendly intreaty, then a diſcreet reproof, now deſerved praiſe, then a powerful word of comfort, now an encouraging, animated addreſs, then a hearty intereſt in the deſigns, in the fortunes, in the actions of others, may prevent many faults and tranſgreſſions, may ward off many a misfortune, obviate much cauſe of uneaſineſs, reſtrain and abate many a hurtful paſſion, occaſion and reward many a good deed, unite many hearts together, and open to them various ſources of ſatisfaction and happineſs. There often, by the preſence and operation of eminently intelligent and virtuous men, the nobleſt qualities of the human heart are developed, and purpoſes brought to maturity and to effect, which otherwiſe would have remained in the intention alone. And how much may we there effectuate by our example! What influence may we have on others! When they ſee and obſerve the beauty, the complacency, the generoſity, the gentleneſs of virtue, in the lineaments of our face, in our judgments, in our whole deportment; when they perceive the harmony ſubſiſting in all the parts of our conduct, how tranquil, how ſatisfied, how confident

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the enjoyment of a good conſcience and the aſſurance of the divine approbation render us; how cheerful and rational our devotion is; how reſpectable, how amiable, muſt virtue and piety appear to them! what an impreſſion muſt theſe obſervations, this view, make on the good and the bad, on the ſtrong and the weak, on the wavering and the reſolute? What a ſalutary compunction muſt it excite in one, what a generous emulation in another, what firmneſs and perſeverance in a third!

Social life in ſhort, my pious hearers, when properly uſed, is productive of very many innocent and real pleaſures to us. The various advantages it procures us, is already the richeſt and the pureſt ſource of them. This greater knowledge of mankind, this extenſion of our perceptions and range of obſervation, this approximation of our heart and mind to each other, this inward ſenſe of our mutual alliance, this diſcipline in the moſt honourable diſpoſitions and virtues, this opportunity for doing good and promoting happineſs: what pleaſure muſt it procure to the friend of truth, the friend of virtue, the friend of man! And how many other ſources of pleaſure are open to us by the reciprocal confidence, the greater freedom, the natural endeavour to pleaſe, and to preſent ourſelves on the moſt advantageous ſide, the various exertions and proofs of the benevolence of our brethren, the gaiety of converſation, the charms of mirth, the many agreeable occupations and amuſements of our ſenſes and our

mind, which are the property of ſocial life and give it all its worth! And how refreſhing and reviving is the ſober enjoyment of theſe pleaſures, when combined with conſciouſneſs and ſelf-conſideration! It recruits our ſpirits after finiſhing ſome laborious taſk; it rewards us for our induſtry and fidelity in the functions of an arduous calling: it furniſhes relaxation to the mind after intenſe application, by giving a freer and eaſier ſcope to activity. It is repoſe, and yet not an inactive, an irkſome reſt; it is employment, and yet not compulſory, not weariſome buſineſs. We there enjoy our exiſtence in common, our diſtinctions, our goods, our proſpects and connections; we there enjoy in common and with gladneſs of heart, the various gifts and recreations which providence has granted us to enjoy; we there feel the value of the mutual eſteem and affection and friendſhip, that connects us together; we there find ourſelves encouraged and recompenſed by the applauſe that is given to our projects, our ſentiments and our actions; we there calm and delight ourſelves in the idea of the manifold aſſiſtances and ſervices we may expect from each other, and the number of things we may accompliſh by united efforts; we there find a variety of food for our taſte, for our mind; we there walk a ſmooth and pleaſant path, beſtrewed with flowers, and thus acquire freſh cheerfulneſs and vigour for purſuing the rougher and thorny parts of our journey. And muſt not this be an agreeable mode of exiſtence, a deſirable enjoyment

ment of diverſified and ſubſtantial pleaſure? Muſt not the ſocial life be of great value which procures us all theſe advantages?

Judge then for yourſelves, my pious hearers, what ſocial life might be and procure to us, what a ſchool of wiſdom and virtue, what a ſource of happineſs it is capable of being rendered, if we conſtantly turned it to the beſt account; and thence conclude, that it is commonly our own fault, when it is comparatively of ſmall advantage to us. In the mean time, you are not to require of it all theſe benefits, all theſe pleaſures, in an uninterrupted ſucceſſion, and always in an equally high degree. In that caſe your expectations would ſeldom be ſatisfied, and ſocial life would ſoon become irkſome to you. It is ſufficient, that it is adapted to procure us theſe advantages and pleaſures, and actually does, in a greater or leſs proportion. Nothing more is requiſite for demonſtrating its excellent worth.

Recognize and feel then this value of ſocial life. Rejoice in the natural capacities and diſpoſitions the creator has granted you for it. Beware of ſlighting or rejecting what is ſo deeply ſeated in the nature of man, and is ſo well calculated to promote his perfection and happineſs. Much rather follow this impulſe of your nature. Addict yourſelves to the uſe and enjoyment of ſocial life; but uſe and enjoy it ſo as becomes the wiſe man, the chriſtian. Never let either the affairs of your vocation, or your domeſtic duties, or your chriſtian profeſſion, or the prudent

practice of ſilent contemplation and rational devotion be injured by it. Call yourſelf frequently to account concerning the temper of mind you carry with you into ſocial life and in which you partake of it, touching the advantages and pleaſures you procure from it. Be not indolently and coldly contented with every ſlight advantage, with every trifling pleaſure you may there caſually obtain. Endeavour to extract from it all the benefit, all the pleaſures it is able to yield. Provide therein not only for your ſenſes, but likewiſe for your heart, for your underſtanding, for your reflections and feelings; and reap from ſocial life ſuch fruits as may be ſerviceable to you in your buſineſs, and ſolace you in retirement.

Beware of conſidering ſocial life as a matter to the uſe and enjoyment whereof neither attention nor conſideration, neither wiſdom nor virtue are required, to which every one is equally adapted and prepared, and from which every one may promiſe himſelf equal advantage. No, only the attentive and thoughtful, only the good, the ſenſible, the virtuous man, can enjoy all the benefits and pleaſures of ſocial life which we have been conſidering, or even in a ſuperior degree. The ſatisfactions and pleaſures which the thoughtleſs, the giddy, the wicked man enjoys therein, are commonly very deceitful, or of no great value. Connections that are founded on ſelf-intereſt, on caprice, or diſhoneſt projects, are of no long duration; they are as ſuddenly

denly relaxed or diſſolved as they were formed. Pleaſures that proceed not from a good, humane and tender heart, which depend merely on chance, tend ſolely to paſs away time, and to ſtun the intellect; pleaſures wherein virtue and friendſhip are unconcerned, may poſſibly be innocent, but can never be deſirable in any important degree, never wholly employ the ſoul in any worthy and honourable manner.

No, uſe ſocial life to the end to which it is adapted and ordained. Strive by it to increaſe and to rectify your knowledge of mankind, to enlarge the circle of your obſervation, to enrich your ſtock of uſeful notions, and to confirm you in every worthy ſentiment, to diſcipline yourſelf in every virtue. There learn to rejoice in your fellow-creatures; learn to love them, ſhew them your affection by numberleſs ſervices and tender aſſiduities; communicate freely and abundantly and honourably to others of what you poſſeſs, if you would partake in what they have to beſtow. There enjoy the pleaſure of inſtructive, entertaining diſcourſe, the pleaſure of friendſhip and confidence, the pleaſure of ſocial gladneſs in the bounties of God; enhance and ſanctify theſe pleaſures, by the cheerful recollection of God, the donor of them; and then let the benefits and pleaſures you obtain from mutual converſe with your brethren, give you freſh incitement and vigour to the diſcharge of every duty of buſy, of domeſtic, of ſolitary life. So will your turn for ſociety be not only

only harmleſs, but every way profitable to you. So will it fit you for entering hereafter, in a higher ſtate of exiſtence, into a cloſer and more bliſsful connection with the wiſeſt and beſt of men, in ſociety with the diſencumbered ſpirits of the virtuous and the juſt, and from your intercourſe with them derive ſtill more copious portions of perfection and happineſs.

SERMON XXX.

The Value of a Buſy Life.

GOD, thou haſt appointed us to an active, buſy life. To this end thou haſt granted us all the neceſſary capacities and endowments and the moſt powerful impulſes. To this end haſt thou ſubjected us to ſo many wants, and rendered their demands ſo urgent. To this end haſt thou connected us all ſo cloſely together, and placed us in ſuch a ſtate of dependence on each other. It is thy gracious appointment that as rational and free agents we ſhould enjoy the honour and the pleaſure, of being, under thy inſpection and by thy aſſiſtance, the ſtay and patrons of our brethren, and that by doing good we ſhould reſemble thee, who from everlaſting to everlaſting art always doing good and conſtantly the beſt. Far be it then from us to miſapprehend theſe advantages or to leave them unemployed! Far be it from us to addict ourſelves to a ſlothful, inactive, lazy life! Far be it from us to be ever weary in well-doing! No, to uſe the capacities and energies which thou

haſt implanted in us, and to uſe them in the beſt, the worthieſt manner, to perform the buſineſs thou haſt given us to do, and to perform it with diligence and fidelity; to be always effecting and promoting more good and utility amongſt mankind: be that our delight and our glory, be that the way by which we ſeek and find perfection and happineſs! Confirm us thyſelf, o merciful God, in theſe good diſpoſitions, and grant that they may be brought into action in deed and in truth. Let us even now be ſo convinced of the advantage of a conduct ſo conſiſtent with ſuch diſpoſitions, that we may be awakened and powerfully excited to it, or confirmed in it. Bleſs in this view our reflections on the doctrines that are now to be delivered to us, and hearken to our ſupplications, through Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed Lord, in whoſe name we further addreſs thee, ſaying, as he taught us: Our father, &c.

ROM. xii. 11.

Not ſlothful in buſineſs.

BUT too many people ſigh after reſt as their ſupreme felicity, complain of the multiplicity of affairs and concerns that preſs upon them; wiſh they were diſcharged from them; long to be freed from all neceſſity of employment in any ſtated way; that they

they might apply their time and their faculties to ſome agreeable purſuit, and make ſuch a uſe of them as might be moſt agreeable to their taſte and inclination. Such men ſeldom know rightly what it is they would have; they commonly wiſh to exchange a few ſmall, very tolerable incumbrances and evils for a far greater burden. Reſt, my pious hearers, is indeed a very deſirable object; but it conſiſts not in idleneſs, in ſlothful inaction. It is founded on moderation, on regularity, on inward contentment. It is compatible with the buſieſt life; and no man underſtands and enjoys it leſs than the idle and unemployed. No, to a man that is in poſſeſſion of his health and faculties, a life of buſineſs is far preferable to one ſpent without occupation. It procures him infinitely more ſatisfactions and pleaſures, and conduces far more to his perfection and happineſs. The ſacred writings therefore, which know our real wants, and beſt underſtand what tends to render us good and happy, everywhere incite us to induſtry, to diligence, to the exertion of our abilities. "Be not ſlothful in buſineſs," ſays the apoſtle Paul in our text. Perform the buſineſs of your office, of your calling, not from compulſion, not with reluctance, not in an indolent, negligent way; but execute it with care and application. Let us, my pious hearers, in order to awaken in us a more ready compliance with this apoſtolical precept, conſider the great value of a buſy life; and to that end firſt inquire, how ſuch a life ſhould be conſtituted for having

having a great value; and then, what confers that value on it, or wherein it conſiſts.

By a buſy life we are to underſtand a life wherein, by our ſtation, our office, our calling, our connections with other perſons, we have to manage and execute ſo many and ſuch diverſe affairs and functions, moſtly ſtated, as our time and abilities will allow us to manage and execute.

In order that ſuch a life may poſſeſs a real, a ſignal value, in the firſt place, theſe works, theſe buſineſſes muſt be proportionate to our powers of mind and body. We ſhould know and underſtand what we have to do and to manage; we ſhould poſſeſs the requiſite capacity, dexterity, ſkill; we ſhould, at leaſt generally ſpeaking, be able to proceed with facility and a certain confidence in ourſelves; we ſhould therefore have been long and early trained to them, ſo as to have acquired a certain aptitude in them. If we are plagued and perplexed and checked every moment, as it were, in our work and affairs, either through ignorance of what they demand of us, or from heſitations and doubt concerning the beſt method of beginning or of proſecuting them, or from a conſciouſneſs of our inability to complete them: ſuch a life can indeed be of no great value to us; it is a burden, an oppreſſive burden, under which we may eaſily ſink.

In order farther that a life of buſineſs ſhould be really, highly valuable to us; the buſineſs we carry on

on ſhould be lawful, and we ſhould be fully convinced of the lawfulneſs of it. We ſhould be able to tranſact it without inward uneaſineſs, with a quiet conſcience, without ſervile apprehenſion of God. Neither ſhould it give us cauſe even to be aſhamed before men; and we have no reaſon to be ſo, whenever our work or employment is neither at variance with integrity nor with the love of our neighbour, neither in oppoſition to divine nor human laws, let it be in all other reſpects as mean and inſignificant as it may. On the contrary, if we are entangled in affairs which our own conſcience diſapproves, or which we cannot in direct terms pronounce to be right; in affairs on which we dare not beſpeak the approbation and bleſſing of the ſupreme being, and while employed in them muſt be alarmed at the thought of him and his preſence; in affairs which are held to be degrading and diſhonourable by all intelligent and honeſt men, or are reckoned unworthy of the pains and the time we beſtow upon them: then indeed ſuch a life has ſo much the leſs value for being ſo buſy. Affairs which a man is forced to conceal from the ſight of God, from the world, from himſelf, the ſcope and deſign whereof he muſt cover with the veil of ſecreſy, of artifice, of miſrepreſentation; of which a man dare not give account to others and ſcarcely to himſelf; and from which he has reaſon to fear, ſooner or later, diſgrace or puniſhment; ſuch affairs muſt neceſſarily embitter the whole

whole life of the wretch that is engaged in them, and can produce nothing but ſorrow and trouble.

For rendering a buſy life really, highly valuable, thirdly, regularity and order ſhould preſide in our affairs. We ſhould know how one buſineſs follows on another, how they are conjoined together, how one is complicated in the other, how one conduces to the alleviation, the diſpatch and the execution of another. We ſhould be able to take a juſt, and as far as poſſible a complete ſurvey of the whole, and know determinately what we have to do and to provide for in every portion of time, in every place, in every department, in every reſpect. Regularity, my pious hearers, facilitates even the moſt complicated and the moſt troubleſome affairs. With that they ſeldom come upon us unawares, ſeldom find us unprepared; and even the incidental and unexpected always find leiſure and room where regularity prevails. Regularity enables us to do all things with eaſe, compoſure, and calmneſs; and no labour exhauſts us leſs, none better ſucceeds, than what we perform in this temper of mind. On the other hand, where all is in diſorder, there perplexity, contradiction, vexation, and diſcord, eſtabliſh their ſway; there a man knows not where to begin, how to proceed, or when to leave off; there one buſineſs crowds upon another; there one is forgotten, and another neglected; there a man will be one while over-hurried, and at another overloaded with buſineſs; there a man has

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ſo many forgotten or neglected affairs to recollect, that he can ſcarcely attend to the preſent; there a man muſt at one time exert himſelf till he is fatigued and exhauſted, and knows not at another what he ſhall firſt undertake; there a man has no fixed point to which he tends, and knows not how near he is to the end of his labours; and all this muſt neceſſarily render his buſineſs diſagreeable and difficult to him.

Is it expedient laſtly that a life of buſineſs ſhould be of real, ſignal value to us, we ſhould purſue ſuch affairs as we may probably expect will be productive of utility to ourſelves or to others; though it is by no means neceſſary that we ſhould foreſee and previouſly aſcertain this utility, or always immediately or viſibly reap from it proportionably to our deſires and endeavours. Conſtantly to be running on the courſe at random, and without hopes of reaching the goal, at length muſt weary the moſt indefatigable racer. To be always working and never to ſee the fruit of our labour advancing to maturity, never to be able to gather it, muſt at length render the moſt induſtrious, the moſt perſevering workman dull and diſpirited. It ſeldom however happens, and ſeldom without our fault, that lawful buſineſs, conducted with prudence, with application and regularity, can fail of being uſeful to ourſelves and to others. Only we muſt be neither ſelfiſh nor covetous: not look ſolely to our own intereſt, but alſo to the general

good; not only to outward, viſible, preſent advantage, but alſo take into the account the remoter good conſequences of our affairs, and their influence on our ſpiritual perfection; and then, with a very moderate ſhare of ſucceſs, we can neither fail of an incitement to buſineſs, nor of the rewards attending it.

If then a life of buſineſs be ſo framed, my pious hearers, if the affairs incumbent on us be proportionate to our faculties and powers; if they be innocent and lawful; if we carry them on with order and regularity; if we may promiſe ourſelves advantage from them: ſurely we muſt aſcribe a real, a ſignal value to ſuch a life; we muſt prefer it infinitely to a life of indolence.

And now what gives it this value? Wherein does it conſiſt? That we may be able to anſwer this queſtion, we have only to weigh the conſequences and effects of a life thus employed.

A buſy life is, in the firſt place, the beſt, the only ſure preſervative from that languor of mind we feel whenever time hangs heavy on our hands; and that languor is inconteſtably a grievous burden. Never is the buſy man at a loſs to know how he ſhall employ the preſent day, the preſent hour, with what he ſhall occupy or amuſe himſelf. No ſooner does he awake from ſleep but he goes to his daily labour, ſees it already before him, and diſpoſes and connects the ſeveral parts of it together. Every period of the day has its particular allotment;

ment; one buſineſs ſucceeds another, one is conſtantly replaced by the next in order; every hour brings with it, as it were, its particular contribution; and the leiſure his affairs allow him, is uſually too ſhort to let him fail in the opportunities and means of paſſing it both pleaſantly and profitably. And thus the hours, the days, the weeks, the years elapſe, without ever being tedious, ever being burdenſome to him; and yet are they by no means vaniſhed away: he knows he has uſed them, that he has employed them in a lawful and beneficial way, that he has turned them to an honeſt and juſt account, and that, in regard to their conſequences, they are not loſt. — On the other hand, how unhappy is the indolent man and the loiterer! How often is he utterly at a loſs to know with what he ſhall begin the day, how he ſhall paſs the firſt, the beſt, the moſt of its hours! How anxiouſly does he ſtrive to divert himſelf! How reſtleſs, how diſpirited does he run from one object to another, from one place to another, from one buſineſs to another, now beginning this, then that, finds nothing to his taſte, and is ſatisfied with none! How much do his gratifications and pleaſures depend on the moſt trifling accidents, and how eaſily does the privation of any of his cuſtomary diſſipations and diverſions render him wretched! How hard is he often put to it, to what dreadful ſhifts is he often reduced, for driving on, or, as he calls it himſelf, for killing his time! How impatiently

does he long for the hour when he may lay down the load of dulneſs he has endured all day, and ſink into the arms of ſleep, if haply he may even there enjoy repoſe!

A buſy life is farther a ſure preſervative from a thouſand follies and ſinful exceſſes, which the man who leads an indolent and lazy life can ſeldom avoid. He that has no ſettled buſineſs, who is conſequently oppreſſed and perſecuted by liſtleſſneſs and languor of mind, who feels himſelf unhappy, readily falls in with everything that promiſes him diſtraction, entertainment, or pleaſure, with anything from which he may hope for an alleviation of his condition. And, ſince he has ſo many hours, whole days and weeks and years to occupy, he need not be nice in chuſing the means and the perſons that may aſſiſt him in this deſign; muſt often while away his time with the loweſt and moſt inſipid amuſements, and ſeek a kind of ſatisfaction from the groſſeſt of pleaſures; and ſince the better, the buſy claſs of mankind, neither wiſh nor venture to aſſociate with him, he is generally confined to the company and converſation of ſuch as, like him, are a burden to themſelves and to others, who are as ignorant as himſelf how to make a good and worthy uſe of their faculties and their time. And from what follies and extravagances can ſuch an one be ſafe? Into what folly, into what vice will he not readily plunge, whenever they promiſe him paſtime or gratification? Far different is the caſe with the buſy

buſy man, who is buſied in the way I have juſt deſcribed. His buſineſs allows him too little leiſure, and gives his mind too manly, too ſerious a turn, to let him fall into the temptation of miſapplying the few minutes he has to ſpare. The love of order that accompanies him in his affairs, forſakes him not in his periods of recreation. And theſe, from his good character and conduct, he may paſs in the company of the beſt and moſt deſerving perſons, which he neceſſarily prefers to the converſation of the fooliſh and the frivolous, with men who muſt appear to him contemptible and noxious.

A buſy life is thirdly the moſt powerful incentive, and the beſt means of unfolding our abilities, of diſplaying, of exerciſing, of invigorating our faculties, and accordingly of promoting our real perfection. Without attention, without conſideration, without reflection, without comparing and connecting ſeveral things together, without a conſtant reference to the paſt and the future, no buſineſs that is not merely mechanical can be effectually carried on; and the more complicated, the more multifarious, the more important it is, the more unremittedly muſt we confine our attention and reflections to it, and keep all our mental powers in action. Neither are the obſtacles and difficulties that more or leſs accompany every ſpecies of affairs, ever to be conquered, without induſtry, without regularity, without perſevering patience, without firmneſs, without foreſight and prudence. How

powerful then muſt the motives of duty, neceſſity, profit and honour, be to the application and not unfrequently to the exertion of our abilities! And how much farther muſt we proceed in the good, in the beſt application of them; how much more juſtly ſhall we learn to think; how much more intelligent, circumſpect, prudent, diſcreet, wary, dextrous and virtuous, ſhall we become; how much more uſeful to others than we could poſſibly by a lazy and inactive life! How much does the man of buſineſs learn to comprehend with his underſtanding, to retain in his memory, and to execute with his powers! How rapidly and how eaſily does he ſurvey as it were at one glance, a long train of events, a whole ſeries of things! How juſtly does he hit the point in which they all unite! How perſpicuouſly does he unravel the moſt intricate matters! How many events and revolutions of things does he foreſee; and how much does he adopt in his plans and projects, which would frighten the ignorant or inexperienced, and throw them into pale aſtoniſhment! And what obſtacles will he not at length overcome, what difficulties will he not vanquiſh, by courage and confidence! And muſt not theſe advantages be thought deſirable by all men? Will they be too dearly purchaſed by a buſy, a laborious life? Can we exerciſe our powers without the exertions to which they are adapted, and can we ſtrengthen and improve them without exerciſe? Are capacities and powers,

which

which we poſſeſs indeed, but do not produce, do not apply, do not know how properly to uſe, of any great value? Does not our inward ſpiritual perfection, the only ſpecies of perfection that remains with us for ever, conſiſt in the propereſt, eaſieſt, beſt, happieſt uſe, in the greateſt poſſible improvement of them? And ſhall we rather let theſe noble powers, powers by which we are able to effect ſo much, ſhall we rather let them ſleep and ſtagnate, than awaken and invigorate them by activity and induſtry?

A life of buſineſs is fourthly the beſt means of being uſeful to others in numberleſs ways, and of having a great and manifold influence on the general welfare. For the ſubſiſtence and advantage of ſociety, my pious hearers, it is neceſſary that various buſineſſes and works be executed by its members, and that they be executed with aſſiduity and faithfulneſs. The one ſhould in this manner, and the other in that, provide for the wants, the conveniences, the elegances, the pleaſures of his brethren. The more works and buſineſſes of theſe kinds therefore we undertake and complete: the more uſeful are we to ſociety; the more meritorious do we render ourſelves; the more ample is the contribution we bring to the common welfare. The buſy man alone is grateful to the community which ſupports and protects him, and procures him a thouſand advantages; he repays, and often repays with intereſt, the ſervices it does him.

Whereas the unemployed, the idler, is a mean-ſpirited drone, always receiving, and never giving, profitable to none, and yet requiring ſervice from all; a fraudulent debtor, daily increaſing his debt, and never intending to pay it. — And how extenſively does the buſy man operate around him! for what numbers of his brethren, near him and afar off, known to him and unknown, of all claſſes and conditions, mediately or immediately, does he think and provide and labour! What ſervices does he render them, by his counſel, by his aſſiſtance, by his acuteneſs, by his dexterity, by his induſtry, by his integrity! How many others does he uſefully ſet at work by means of his own proper buſineſs! How much evil does he thus prevent, how much good promote! How often is he by this means the benefactor, not only of the preſent race of men, but alſo of future generations! And muſt not ſuch a life be of great value, muſt it not be far preferable to a life of inaction and idleneſs?

But if a life of buſineſs be highly uſeful, ſo muſt it alſo fifthly on that very account be an abundant ſpring of pleaſure and happineſs to ourſelves. And in fact, my pious hearers, how great the pleaſure to exert our talents, to diſplay our abilities with ſkill, and in the moſt generally uſeful way! What a pleaſure to vanquiſh impediments, to conquer difficulties, to plan extenſive projects, to finiſh uſeful works, to bring good deſigns to perfection! What a ſatiſfaction,

faction, if on reckoning with ourſelves at the end of the day, or the week, or the year, on the application of our faculties and our time, we can ſoothe ourſelves in reflecting that we have not ſuffered them to lie idle, that we have not ſquandered them away, that we have not miſemployed them, but have uſed them anſwerably to the will of God, and have accompliſhed many good and uſeful purpoſes with them! What a pleaſure, when we can ſay to ourſelves, that we have diſcharged our obligations, worthily maintained our poſt, that we have ſerved and aſſiſted ſome of our fellow-creatures, that we have been the benefactor of our brethren! What a pleaſure, when we may promiſe ourſelves the reſpect, the affection, the gratitude of the whole ſociety, and can accept and employ their reciprocal ſervices, their teſtimonies of eſteem and remunerations, with a good conſcience, and with the grateful ſentiment that we are not unworthy of them! And how greatly muſt all theſe pleaſures contribute to the felicity of the individual! How pleaſant to him muſt be the retroſpect on his paſt, the enjoyment of his preſent, and the proſpect of his future life! How boldly may he think on God, and how freely and confidently converſe with men! How contented, how ſatisfied muſt he be in the conſciouſneſs of his growth in inward perfection and the ſurvey of the good he has effected about him! How delicious muſt each longer or ſhorter recreation be to him, the enjoyment of each innocent pleaſure, either ſenſual

ſual or intellectual, ſince he has earnt it by uſeful employment, and has not palled his appetite for it by too frequent an indulgence in this ſeaſoning of life! Pure advantages, pure pleaſures and ſatisfactions, utterly unknown to the man without occupation, the idler. To him his faculties, his powers are often a burden. To him every day, every week, every year of his life, is alike empty of actions and events that might ſoothe and refreſh his mind. Him the paſt afflicts, the preſent perplexes and the future confounds. And as often as he is forced to reflect upon himſelf, he muſt ſtand abaſhed before God and man. His very pleaſures are monotonous and inſipid. And how often is he cloyed of them, how often muſt he nauſeate them! How great then muſt be the advantage in this reſpect of the induſtrious over the idle!

To ſum up all, my pious hearers, a buſy life, conducted with intelligence, with regularity, with conſcientiouſneſs, and directed to the common intereſt, is the beſt preparation for a ſuperior, a more perfect and more bliſsful ſtate in the future world. The more we here unfold our capacities, and ſtrengthen and improve our faculties by practice; in ſo much greater and more important matters ſhall we there employ them; the more ſhall we there be able to execute with them; the more quickly and eaſily ſhall we there march onwards to the mark of ſupreme perfection. The more carefully and diligently we do in this province of the kingdom of God,

God, what he has delivered us to perform; the more will he confide to us to tranſact and to uſe in other provinces of his kingdom. The more extenſively we here operate about us in views of general utility; ſo much the larger the field of operation he there will aſſign us. The better we here allow ourſelves to be educated and formed by our heavenly father, the better will he be able to employ us there when we ſhall have exchanged this ſtate of infancy for manhood. Reſt and refreſhment without previous toil, payment without ſervice, perfection without the beſt and faithfulleſt uſe of our powers, bliſs without an active, buſy life, can no more be thought of in heaven than it can upon earth, can there no more exiſt than here. What an encouraging proſpect for the man that leads a life of buſineſs! And what a comfortleſs, melancholy idea for the ſlothful, who paſſes his days in loitering and idleneſs.

And now, my pious hearers, take all this into your minds at one view, conſider, that a buſy life exempts a man from the oppreſſive load of liſtleſſneſs; that it ſecures him from a thouſand follies and ſinful exceſſes; that it moſt cogently incites him to unfold his capacities, to exert and exerciſe his faculties, and thereby induces and impels him to advance his perfection; that it furniſhes him with means and opportunities of being uſeful to mankind in the greateſt variety of ways, and of acquiring a vaſt influence on the general intereſt; that it is a rich ſource of pleaſure and happineſs to himſelf;

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that in ſhort it prepares and fits him for a higher and better ſtate: and ſay after all, whether a life of buſineſs is not of real, of great value; whether it is not far preferable to an inactive, idle, unoccupied life.

Certainly, my dear friends, this is the beſt, the nobleſt uſe of life. Hereto are we ordained and called; hereto has God entruſted to us capacities and powers, and given us ſo many urgent wants. Thus alone can we accompliſh his will and be ſubſervient to his purpoſes on earth. Thus alone can we become as perfect, as happy as man can be in the preſent ſtate, and extract from this, uſually ſo ſhort and uncertain a life, as much advantage as it is able to afford. Thus no moment of it paſſes empty and unenjoyed away. Thus we as it were multiply our exiſtence and lengthen our life. Thus we live and operate in others and through others, and frequently even to the lateſt poſterity. Render therefore thanks to God, my dear friends, if he has placed you by his providence in a buſy ſtation, proportionate to your powers, and adequate to your time. Complain not of the multiplicity and trouble of it. Be not drowzy and indolent in the performance of it. It is ſuited to the ſtate of exerciſe and education we live in at preſent; and if you carry it on with underſtanding, with regularity, with conſcientiouſneſs, if you conſider and treat it as a taſk aſſigned you by God, you will purſue it with ſatisfaction and eaſe, and not without advantage.

Therefore,

Therefore, long not for the imaginary happineſs of an indolent repoſe, as you would not ſoon ſeverely pay for your fooliſh wiſh. Let it rather be to you, as it was to our ſaviour, your meat, your pleaſure, to perform what God has given you to do, to work indefatigably while yet it is day, leſt the gloomy night of affliction and ſorrow, or the impenetrable ſhades of death, come on before you have finiſhed your taſk. Be like the faithful ſervants, whom their lord, at his coming, be it late or early, finds buſily employed in his ſervice.

SERMON XXXI.

The Value of Commerce.

GOD, who art the governor and ruler of all, the parts as well as the whole, the ſmall as well as the great, what connection, what order and harmony prevail throughout the whole of thy immenſe domain; and how much more ſhould we be loſt in profound aſtoniſhment and joyful tranſport, could we ſurvey and comprehend in our minds a larger portion of it! But even on our terreſtrial globe, even in the government which thou exerciſeſt over us men, what traces of the wiſeſt, moſt benevolent direction and providence are diſcoverable! How exactly adapted is all to the greateſt poſſible welfare of animated nature! How intimately all is connected and interwoven together! What an indiſſoluble chain of cauſes and effects encircle all, the ultimate tendency and reſult whereof is life and happineſs! To each of us haſt thou allotted his proper place, on each beſtowed his appointed meaſure of capacities and powers, to each of us aſſigned his

his ſphere of operation, to each of us committed his particular affairs; and if every individual do that which thou calleſt him to do, then each perſon provides and works for all, and all provide and work for everyone, and thus the whole innumerable family of thy offſpring on earth, are brought conſtantly nearer to their perfection. How honourable likewiſe in this reſpect is the vocation to which thou haſt called us! How greatly it behoves us to fulfill the ſeveral duties of it with cheerful minds, with unabated zeal, with unimpeachable fidelity! Oh teach us then likewiſe herein to acknowledge and revere thy purpoſes as thoſe of the wiſeſt and kindeſt parent; let us by conſtantly eſteeming the buſineſs of our ſtation and calling on earth as highly important, be ſtrongly incited to proſecute it with ever increaſing care and dignity. Bleſs to this end our meditations on the leſſons of truth that are now to be delivered to us. Let our perceptions be increaſed and our ſentiments elevated and ennobled by them. In this behalf we offer up unto thee our ſupplications in the name of Jeſus Chriſt our lord, and addreſs thee further, truſting in his promiſes, as, Our father, &c.

ISAIAH, xxiii. 8.

Whoſe merchants are princes, whoſe traffickers are the honourable of the earth.

IT is a great matter, my devout audience, for a man to know how to magnify his vocation, the profeſſion he is engaged in, or the buſineſs he carries on. This alleviates to him all the troubles and diſagreeableneſs attending it; this repays him for the painful induſtry and the unremitted cares he beſtows upon it; this ſtimulates him to do all that relates to it with alacrity and exactitude, and to neglect no part of it as unworthy of his attention; though never ſo inſignificant or trifling in itſelf. And how is this to be done? How does a man magnify his calling? How does he add dignity to it? On one hand, by viewing it as a conſequence of the regulations and conſtitutions eſtabliſhed in the world by God; ſaying to himſelf: It is the will of God that mankind ſhould be ſo connected together, ſo labour for each other, and thus mutually contribute to the public intereſt; and that I in particular ſhould act in the ſtation, the department I fill, in ſuch a manner as my vocation demands. But alſo on the other hand by diſcerning the value of his calling, or what it is that renders it really important and eſtimable, by repreſenting to himſelf its connection

connection with the welfare of ſociety at large, and its beneficial influence upon it. By this means every man may confer a dignity on the calling he purſues, ſo that it be but lawful. And this is indiſputably the beſt means and the ſtrongeſt incitement to walk, as the apoſtle exhorts us, worthy of our vocation. — — What may be advanced of every profeſſion holds good in a particular manner when applied to commerce. And, as the generality of you are one way or other concerned in this vocation, it will not be thought unſuitable if I deliver a few conſiderations which will enable you to think adequately of it. Having then, in the foregoing diſcourſe, inveſtigated the value of a buſy life in general, I ſhall now proceed particularly to examine into the value of commerce, as a particular ſpecies of it. In this deſign we ſhould firſt ſhew, what gives to commerce, in the abſtract, a conſiderably great value; and then, how and by what means this its value is enhanced in regard to thoſe by whom commerce is carried on.

When we aſcribe a diſtinguiſhed value to commerce, my pious hearers, we conſider it not barely as a means of providing for our own ſupport. This property it has in common with every profeſſion, even the meaneſt calling of life, that it procures us food and raiment, and ſupplies the wants of nature. Neither do we conſider it barely as the means of acquiring wealth, and of living more commodiouſly and elegantly than others, or of performing a more

diſtinguiſhed part in ſociety. For theſe likewiſe are advantages that belong not excluſively to this ſtate of life. They may fall to the lot of the artiſt, the mechanic, the huſbandman, the man in public office, and even to perſons of the learned profeſſions. No, if we would rightly conſider and appretiate the eminent value of commerce, and thence acquire for it the reſpect it deſerves, we muſt take into the account its beneficial influence on the general proſperity, what it contributes towards the ſtock of human perfection and happineſs. And now what are its pretenſions in this reſpect?

Firſt, it ſets mankind upon a far greater, a far more diverſified, and thereby a more uſeful activity; and whatever promotes uſeful activity among mankind, promotes their intereſt. For only thus are the capacities and powers ſlumbering as it were within, rouzed, developed, exerciſed, and gradually brought to that degree of ſtrength and perfection which they are deſigned to attain. And how greatly does commerce contribute to this effect! What numbers of hands, what numbers of heads, it employs! To what various kinds of trade and induſtry does it give life! To what various others does it communicate a weight and value, which but for it they could never acquire, and which without it would be carried on in a more careleſs and ſuperficial manner! What various kinds of induſtry, of dexterity, of art, does it quicken and ſupport, encourage and reward! How alert and buſy it ren-

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ders in numberleſs reſpects, the inventive faculties of man! What a powerful, far operating ſpring it is, in the whole of ſocial and buſy life! How many wheels of this grand machine, large and ſmall, does it ſet in motion! And what fatal ſtoppages and obſtructions ariſe where its impulſe is checked or impeded! How many people it requires, how many people muſt ſtrenuouſly exert their abilities in various ways, in rearing and obtaining the products of nature, in working them up, in improving them, in ſtowing them, in tranſporting them from one place to another, and often to the remoteſt regions of the habitable earth! How much leſs diligently and induſtriouſly would all this be done, how much fewer people be employed in it, if theſe ſeveral products received not additional value from every man's hand through which they paſs, if by means of commerce they were not exchanged for other products of nature, or bartered to profit! — How much leſs life, alacrity, induſtry, diligence and addreſs, is perceptible where little or no commerce exiſts, than where it flouriſhes! How many hands and heads are there almoſt inactive, which here would be employed in variouſly uſeful ways! Would you convince yourſelves of the life and activity which commerce excites among mankind, tranſport yourſelves in imagination into the midſt of a famous mercantile city, viſit its exchange and its harbour; or only repreſent to yourſelves ſome populous and much frequented mart of trade; what a multitude

and diverſity of buſy perſons of all ranks and conditions will you there perceive! And yet this is extraordinary activity, limited to a ſhort portion of time, and confined to a narrow ſpace; activity very inconſiderable, compared to that which is an endleſs, uninterrupted conſequence of commerce in the generality of countries on the habitable globe. And muſt not this give it a real, conſpicuous value?

Commerce farther connects men more together, brings them nearer to each other, and cauſes their mutual dependence on each other to be more ſenſibly felt; and whatever brings and unites mankind more cloſely together is a ſource of pleaſure and happineſs to them, and may become likewiſe an incitement to virtue. Mutual wants, common tranſactions, common views and advantages; what ſtrong ties of connection! If the merchant be in want of the induſtry, the labour, the mechanical and mental powers, the ſervice and aſſiſtance of a thouſand men; theſe in return ſtand in need of his protection, his ſupport, his encouragement, his pay. If the former would execute his deſigns and attain his purpoſes, a thouſand others muſt co-operate with him to that end. If he would reap the profit he expects from his buſineſs, he muſt let a thouſand others obtain a proportionate advantage. That trade may be carried on with ſucceſs; handicrafts, arts and agriculture, muſt flouriſh alſo; all ranks and conditions of men muſt then have more concerns together, work more for each other, and enter

ter into closer connection. And how extensively does this connection reach! What numerous classes and descriptions it embraces! What nation is so remote that is not brought nearer to the rest by commerce? Along what pathless wilderness, over what steep and craggy mountains, across what untried stormy seas and oceans, does not the merchant find his way to his remotest brethren! Allow it to be self-interest and the thirst of gain that teaches him to despise these dangers and to conquer these difficulties; yet the effect is always that man is thereby more connected with man, that social dispositions are awakened and supported in them, that an interest in their reciprocal prosperity and misfortunes is strengthened and increased; and must not all these considerations taken together tend greatly to the advantage of mankind, and their gradual improvement and perfection?

By the same means, my pious hearers, commerce facilitates to mankind the communication of their perceptions, their inventions and discoveries, their endowments and advantages, to each other. It occasions a constant and universal circulation and exchange of all these things among them. It indeed likewise disseminates many faults and vices, and opens many sources of calamity where they would else have remained unknown. But do not those manifold and great benefits far exceed these accidental disadvantages? How far behind would the human race have been in every particular; how

little would they have advanced above the condition of infancy; with how much labour and toil muſt they have ſupplied the prime wants of nature; how ſlowly would they have proceeded in civilization; if every nation, every province, had been confined to its own experiences, obſervations, diſcoveries and inventions! How much is learnt by one people of another, in neceſſary and uſeful as well as in agreeable and entertaining matters, in mechanics and the fine arts, in agriculture and huſbandry, as well as in the ſublimer ſciences! How many ſteps farther are all theſe advanced at various times by the communication of a ſingle idea, ſome curious inſtrument, or ſome new device! — What important revolutions may ſome freſh branch of commerce, a new kind of manufacture, an introduction of new articles of trade, a new ſcope to the genius, occaſion by promoting arts and ſciences among a whole people! And how quickly is uſeful knowledge now conveyed from one extremity of the inhabited and cultivated earth to the other! How ſoon may the luminous thoughts, which now occupy the mind of one of my brethren in the moſt diſtant regions of the northern or ſouthern hemiſphere, become likewiſe mine, and diffuſe light into my mind and ſatisfaction into my heart, or introduce more order into my conduct and my affairs! How much more eaſily and rapidly, by means of this great connection and extenſive communication, may even the weightieſt matters of religion be diſſeminated, and

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the moſt ſalutary, the moſt comfortable truths be tranſplanted thither where ignorance, error, and baleful ſuperſtition, have hitherto prevailed! And is it not commerce that moſt promotes and facilitates this connection and communication of mankind with each other?

Beſides, my pious hearers, commerce procures mankind numberleſs conveniences, numberleſs kinds of pleaſure and delight, which elſe they muſt be without, or muſt obtain with far greater difficulty, leſs frequently, and with much more labour and expenſe. Scarcely any ſort of natural productions and fruits of the earth, of the works of art and induſtry, are at preſent the excluſive property of any one country. Now whatever either of them has that is eminently good and beautiful is reciprocally an article of exchange. We may now ſee the wonders of nature, in their moſt diverſified and delightful forms; may enjoy the products of every region; make uſe of the intelligence, the abilities, the work of every nation; and may accumulate and employ as our own whatever can flatter the taſte and charm the ſight, whatever can add ornament to our dwellings, beautify our gardens, give neatneſs and warmth to our raiment, or embelliſh our condition, whatever can employ our mind or gratify our curioſity, from the remoteſt and moſt diſſevered diſtricts of the globe; and this, in a hundred reſpects, is within the reach of the poor as well as the rich. And who can be ſo inſenſible to all theſe advantages, as to aſ-

cribe no value to commerce by which he procures them? Or who will allow himſelf to be deterred from pronouncing it eſtimable and deſirable, becauſe theſe conveniences and elegances of life may be abuſed, as indeed they but too often are?

Laſtly, my pious hearers, by all theſe means, commerce contributes in no ſmall degree to ſoften and poliſh the manners of mankind, to form their taſte, and to promote mutual toleration and forbearance among them. The more mankind converſe together, and the more cloſely they are connected among themſelves: the more attention will they ſhew to what may diſpleaſe or pleaſe another; the more aſſiduouſly will they remove every difficulty in the way of their intercourſe with each other, repudiate whatever has a tendency to diſturb their connection, and ſedulouſly avoid whatever may give umbrage or offence to one another. The more good and beautiful articles they can compare and contraſt with others, and the oftener they are neceſſitated to chuſe between them: the more will their taſte be corrected and refined; the more impartial is their judgment of what is beautiful and good. In ſhort, the more diverſity they perceive in the opinions and uſages of mankind, and the more they obſerve how little influence they have on their general and moſt important determinations and actions; the more juſtly will they learn to judge of theſe things; the more will the diſtance and diſlike which theſe cauſes might have occaſioned be weakened;

ened; the more will they be accuſtomed to look upon the individual as a man, and to be kindly affectioned to every good man, to eſteem every intelligent and honeſt man, to whatſoever nation he may belong, whatſoever language he may ſpeak, whatſoever religious opinions he may hold, whatſoever cuſtoms he may chuſe to obſerve. Accordingly this mutual toleration and eſteem is always far greater and more univerſal among mercantile nations, than among ſuch as are more confined to their own territories, and have leſs intercourſe with others.

And this, my pious hearers, this it is, that gives commerce in general and on its own account a great and intrinſic value, what renders it important and honourable in the eyes of the reflecting man. It even poſſeſſes this value in a greater or leſs degree, when the man that carries it on thinks narrowly and acts ſelfiſhly, when he regards it merely in reference to his own perſonal profit, and cares not how little advantageous it may be to others. But in that caſe, and in regard to him, it is of extremely little, or indeed of no value, as he degrades and debaſes it, by his ſentiments and conduct, to a low and deſpicable means of gaining a livelihood. A great diſtinction therefore, my pious hearers, is to be made between the value of commerce, taken intrinſically and at large, and the worthineſs it confers on ſuch as carry it on. The former is and ever remains very great; the latter but too frequently is extremely ſmall. — Would you therefore, who exerciſe this calling, magnify

magnify it likewiſe in regard to yourſelves, and render it a means to you of greater perfection and more durable happineſs; allow me to recommend to you the following admonitions and precepts.

Exerciſe your underſtanding in habits of reflection, and ſtrive to enrich it by augmenting your ſtock of uſeful knowledge, particularly ſuch as relates to your affairs and undertakings. Study the objects in which you are daily concerned, their nature and quality, their utility, the purpoſes to which they may be applied, their modifications and tranſmutations, their influence on the general weal of the community; ſtudy the ways and methods in which they are produced, obtained, wrought up, improved, applied; ſtudy the ſtate of the countries and nations with which in your tranſactions you are mediately or immediately connected; ſtudy the perſons with whom you are concerned in buſineſs, or whom you employ, and on the character of whom ſo much depends in the proſecution of it: ſo will you conſtantly find in all you do more employment and food for your mind; always more clearly underſtand what and wherefore and to what end you do it; and thereby a thouſand objects, which in themſelves may be very inſignificant, will acquire a greater worth and importance in your ſight. You will execute as thinking, as enlightened men, with complacency and pleaſure, what otherwiſe you would only perform as day-labourers, from neceſſity, and probably with diſlike.

Enlarge

Enlarge therefore the orbit of your views, the circuit of your knowledge and perceptions, in proportion as you enlarge your field of action. Purſue the affairs that offer themſelves to you, not in a mere mechanical manner; work and operate, not as it were blindfolded, or merely by old maxims and cuſtoms handed down from father to ſon, but upon well digeſted principles and plans. Strive more and more to comprehend the whole of the concern wherein you are engaged, and to comprehend it with more participation and intereſt. Revolve frequently in your mind the nearer and more remote, the preſent and future conſequences of your tranſactions and dealings, the influence they may and will have, in a thouſand methods, on the conduct, the fortunes, the happineſs of vaſt numbers of mankind of all claſſes and conditions. This alſo will confer great weight and dignity on all you undertake and execute.

Expand your heart too in this reſpect by benevolent, humane ſentiments and feelings. Let not covetouſneſs, not mean ſelf-intereſt, not vanity, but genuine univerſal philanthropy and brotherly love, be the leading principles of your diligence and induſtry. Think it your duty and your glory, not barely to labour for your own, but likewiſe for the general profit; and do this not ſolely according to the natural combination of things, and without peculiarly thinking on it, but do it with conſciouſneſs and conſideration, and ſo as that this view may be always preſent

preſent to your mind. Heſitate not therefore to bear hardſhips, to manage truſts, to tranſact affairs from which you have little particular advantage to expect, but which you know will bring profit to others, or tend to the ſupport and the good of the whole; and reckon not as labour in vain, as pure loſs, whatever is attended by ſuch conſequences and effects. The idea that all you do in your lawful vocation, and by lawful means, is a part of the chain of buſineſſes whereby the general welfare is upheld and advanced, whereby the ſum total of life, of activity, of pleaſure, of happineſs, which is or may be among mankind, is augmented and put in circulation; this idea will give you ſatisfaction and courage in all your affairs, and fill you with an honeſt complacency at the ſight of every reſult of your good endeavours. By ſuch a way of thinking, every buſineſs you tranſact, petty and troubleſome as it may be, will become an honourable employment, a labour of love. And thus will you degrade yourſelves by nothing, think nothing a loſs of time or a diſſipation of your powers, which in any way may be of advantage to ſociety.

In fine, add a dignity to your calling, you who purſue commerce as rational, intelligent and well-intentioned men, by conſidering yourſelves as inſtruments in the hand of providence, whereby the cultivation of the earth and the civilization of its inhabitants are carried on and advanced; as inſtruments whereby God diffuſes and multiplies his ma-

nifold gifts and bleſſings, more intimately connects the whole of his family, ſo widely extended, together, brings them cloſer to each other, and in ſuch various methods animates, ſuſtains, benefits and cheers them all. Do therefore whatever you are called to do by your profeſſion in reference to this honourable appointment; do it from obedience and love to God, our univerſal Father in heaven; do it as by commiſſion from him, and in the manner moſt conformable to the wiſe and benevolent purpoſes of his adminiſtration. By this means you will confer the greateſt dignity on all yonr employments and labours, and exalt the faithful diſcharge of your calling into actual piety. You will ſerve God by ſerving your brethren; accompliſh his will by fulfilling the duties of your vocation; carry on his work by proſecuting your own; and ſo may you alſo, as men worthily filling a ſtation aſſigned them by God, promiſe yourſelves a cheerful exit from this ſcene of things, and the enjoyment of a happy, a bleſſed futurity.

SERMON XXXII.

The Value of a Country-Life, or the edifying Sojourn in the Country.

GOD, thou art not far from every one of us. Wherever we perceive the work of thy hands, there art thou, there acteſt thou; there revealeſt thou thyſelf to us as the great eternal cauſe, the original ſource of all that is and lives, as ſovereign wiſdom and benignity. And wherever thou art and acteſt, there ſpeakeſt thou to us by thy works, there thou informeſt us of thy will; there warneſt thou us of miſery, and ſheweſt us the means and way to be happy. Oh then that we ſought and found thee, the Omnipreſent, every where, that we ſaw and worſhiped thee in all thy works, and never loſt the apprehenſion of thy preſence! Oh that we everywhere and at all times attended to thy voice, readily ſubmitted to be taught of thee, and willingly followed thy call to happineſs! How totally otherwiſe, how much wiſer and better ſhould we then reaſon and judge and act! What light would then be

be diffuſed over all our ways! How ſafely, how confidently, how cheerfully ſhould we then purſue our courſe! How tranquil ſhould we be under thy fatherly inſpection, how cheerful and happy in the ſentiment of communion with thee! Do thou indue our apprehenſions with the knowledge, the inward conviction of this truth, o ever gracious Father, and let it be promoted by the conſiderations in which we are now about to be employed. We preſent unto thee our prayers in humble dependance on thy everlaſting and unchangeable mercy, as declared and manifeſted by our lord and ſaviour Jeſus, concluding our petitions in his comprehenſive words: Our father, &c.

MATTH. xiv. 13.

Jeſus departed thence into a deſart place, apart.

CITIES, large and populous cities, have inconteſtibly their benefits as well as their diſadvantages. The foundation of them, and the concourſe of their inhabitants, are means in the hand of Providence for attaining its views with regard to mankind. And to this they greatly conduce in various ways. The cloſer aggregation, the more intimate connection of ſo many individuals together, ſtrengthens their powers, and renders them capable of many enterpriſes and buſineſſes, for which a greater diſperſion

perſion or ſeparation would abſolutely incapacitate them. Trade and commerce, arts and ſciences, are brought by ſuch cloſer connections, by ſuch a union and reciprocal communication of deſigns, abilities, talents, and aptitudes, to a higher degree of perfection than they could otherwiſe reach. By the daily intercourſe of ſuch numbers of men, of ſuch various tempers and diſpoſitions, the natural genius and faculties are more quickly, more eaſily, more conſiderably unfolded, ſet in motion, and applied. Emulation and ambition are more excited and employed, and produce more diverſified and vigorous effects than in ſolitude, or in the narrow circle of a few acquaintances and neighbours. The manners will be refined; the accommodations and elegances of life improved; the means and opportunities of ſocial pleaſure will be multiplied; and the ſallies of inordinate and violent paſſions will leſs and ſeldomer offend. Striking advantages, for which, in conjunction with many others, we ſtand indebted to civil life, and which certainly are of no ſmall value.

On the other ſide, in great and populous cities, bad example is more contagious; the temptations to folly and vice are far greater, and harder to avoid; the prevalence of faſhion is univerſal and tyrannical; the implicit imitation of the noble, the great and the rich is ſervile; the ſway of received manners and cuſtoms, ſevere and oppreſſive. Innocence, veracity, frankneſs, there more quickly diſappear;

appear; nature is ſtifled by art; ſincerity is there obliged to yield to artifice; ſimplicity is ridiculed as puerile inexperience; the paſſions put on a maſk, but act with greater impetuoſity and danger in their diſguiſe. Taſte is refined, but at the ſame time is enervated and faſtidious; pleaſures are multiplied, but the capacities for enjoying them obtuſed. Beſides all this, the multiplicity of affairs, the noiſy buſtle, the numerous avocations of diverſion in populous cities, are powerful obſtacles to collectedneſs of mind, to conſideration, to vigilance over oneſelf, to frequent diſpatches of an animated look to heaven, and conſequently are powerful obſtacles to wiſdom, to virtue, to devotion.

The more therefore a man is ſmitten with the love of nature and the creator and father of nature; the more attractions innocence, veracity, integrity, ſimple manners have for him; the more taſte he has for ſilent meditation; the more he is able to entertain himſelf; the dearer to him wiſdom and virtue and cordial devotion are: the more agreeable will it be to him at times to exchange the tumult of the town for the quiet of the country; as he there can breathe and think and live more freely; as he there can completely retire within himſelf and converſe with his own heart, can hearken to the voice of God in nature, and in leſs artificial, leſs corrupted men, and reſign himſelf to the moſt natural and real reflections and emotions without reluctance or reſtraint. This, my pious

hearers, has been, in all ages of the world, the nutriment of the mind and the wages of induſtry to the wiſeſt and beſt among the ſons of men.

Our ſaviour likewiſe, that ſublime exemplar to the wiſe and good, ſeems thus to have thought and judged on this material point. He withdrew not indeed from the company of his brethren, nor from populous towns and cities, not even from the capital itſelf; as he could there beſt proſecute the work his father had commiſſioned him to carry on, the work of enlightening and improving his contemporaries and mankind in general. Yet theſe populous cities and towns were not his conſtant reſidence. At times he forſook them, retired, as it is ſaid in our text, to the deſert, that is, to ſome unfrequented or leſs frequented place. At times, as we are likewiſe told in the chapter whence our text is taken, he aſcended the mountain, and there paſſed the evening alone. There he recruited his ſpirits after the weariſome labours of the day; thought upon his grand concern; collected, by contemplation and prayer, by familiar converſe with his heavenly father, freſh energies for accompliſhing his work on earth; recreated himſelf in thinking on what he had already done, and what remained for him ſtill to do; and was happy in the ſentiment of his dignity and his proximity to him that ſent him.

Few of us, my dear friends, are deficient in opportunities for making ſimilar experiences and en-

joying ſimilar ſatisfactions. Many are ſo circumſtanced as to be able to paſs a longer or a ſhorter period of the ſummer in the enjoyment of their gardens or the pleaſures of the country. But whether we turn theſe excurſions to ſuch account as becomes rational and wiſe perſons; whether we extract as much utility and inſtruction from them as they are capable of yielding; is what I ſhall now ſtrive to render eaſy for you to anſwer. To that end, I ſhall point out to you in a few ſhort obſervations, how inſtructive a ſtay in the country is and may be to the man of reflection, the chriſtian.

The time we ſpend in the country, my pious hearers, is inſtructive in regard to God and the relations we ſtand in to him; inſtructive in a view to the dignity and the deſtination of man; and inſtructive in reference to our notions of happineſs.

It is inſtructive, I ſay, firſt, in regard to God and our relations to him. In the tumult of towns, in the hurry of a buſy life, in the giddy circles of amuſement, meditations on God and the apprehenſion of his preſence are but too eaſily prevented or effaced; there the knowledge we have of him is too frequently but a dead letter, and the uſe we make of it only a mechanical operation of the mind. But in the midſt of the great theatre of his works, ſurrounded by the ſtriking effects of his wiſdom and bounty, in the enjoyment of rural tranquillity; in the open and free view of his heaven and his earth, there our feelings are quite different, there we in-

timately feel that in him we live and move and have our being; that we inhale his air, are enlightened and warmed and cheered by his ſun, that we are invigorated by his power and elevated to him, and are encompaſſed on all ſides with the bounties and bleſſings he has provided for us. There the deity is in a manner near us, though he is nowhere far from any one of us. His exiſtence is there more poſitive to us; it is demonſtratively apparent; and any ſecret doubts, that may poſſibly ariſe within at other times, here loſe their force. God is, and he is the creator and father of thee, and of all beings; this everything around us declares in language that cannot be miſtaken. We there ſee him in a manner, acting, working, imparting of himſelf, diffuſing benefits around him with a liberal hand, and employed in the preſervation and welfare of whatever exiſts and lives. The leſs we behold of human art, the more we ſee of nature, and the more beautiful ſhe preſents herſelf to us, the more does ſhe lead us up to God; the more do all objects animate and exalt our ideas and apprehenſions of him. Every blade of graſs, every flower of the field, every plant, every tree, every inſect, every beaſt; the hill, the dale, the ſhady woods, the ſunny plains, the liquid lapſe of murmuring ſtreams, the ample ſky, the riſing and the ſetting ſun, the mild refreſhing breath of evening gales, and the majeſtic violence of the ſtorm, the ſerenely ſmiling ſky, and the dark tempeſtuous night, — all, all we ſee above,

above, or round about us, or beneath, proclaim to us the Allmighty, the Allwiſe, the Allbounteous, and his nearer preſence; all render him as it were ſenſible and apparent; all call upon us to fall in adoration at his feet, to adore his majeſty and to rejoice in his exiſtence. There every thought on God in the good and ſenſible man is attended with kindred emotions; and every apprehenſion of ſupreme wiſdom and goodneſs is blended in his breaſt with reverence, with love, with gratitude, with joy, with hope and confidence.

And here interrogate thyſelf, o man, o chriſtian, how near or how remote, how natural or how foreign to thee is the idea of God, what impreſſion it makes upon thee, what other thoughts and emotions it raiſes within thee. Aſk thyſelf: how wert thou diſpoſed, what didſt thou think, how didſt thou feel, as thou walkedſt alone acroſs the ſmiling fields, or through the flowery mead, or down the verdant lawn, or along the ſhady grove, or by the ſerene and placid luſtre of the moon. Did not a gentle reverential tremor, did not the ſacred ſentiment of the proximity of thy God, affect thee? Did it never happen to thee as if thou ſawſt the Lord, as erſt he was ſeen in paradiſe, walking amongſt his creatures, as if thou heardſt him talking to thee, and explaining to thee his will and his deſigns? And if this holy ſentiment have fallen to thy lot, if it have ever penetrated thy heart; what love to thy creator and father, what

truſt in his benignity and providence, what zeal to do his will and to promote his views, what benevolent diſpoſitions towards all thy fellow-creatures, what aſpirations after ſuperior perfection and bliſs, muſt it have excited in thee! Happy they, who are able to recollect many ſuch bliſsful moments! To them the idea of God is not a ſtranger. It is a vital principle in their ſoul, and procures them exquiſite ſatisfaction and delight.

Rural life is ſecondly very inſtructive in regard to the real worth and the deſtination of man. Here, my chriſtian brother, here man ſhews himſelf to thee more in the true character of man, ſtripped of all outward and dazzling diſtinctions; here mayſt thou better learn to rate him as what he is; learn what confers upon him in quality of man, his proper, his intrinſic worth. A ſound, robuſt body; a ſound independent mind; a cheerful temper; an honeſt heart, glowing with love to God and man; a prudent and active induſtry in his profeſſion; wiſdom, founded on years and experience; virtue that conſiſts more in actions than in words; docility, not indeed making us more learned, but better and more calm within: theſe are of greater account there than birth and rank and ſtation, ſuperior to all the borrowed ſplendour, with which the rich and great make ſuch parade; and theſe alone, both there and everywhere, compoſe the real worth of man. Learn then to eſtimate thyſelf and the inhabitants of towns by this ſtandard;

ſtandard; ſo wilt thou judge differently and far more juſtly both of thyſelf and others. No empty pride in things that belong not to thy proper ſelf will inflate thy mind, no exceſſive eſteem for merely outward diſtinctions will degrade thee into a flatterer and a ſlave. Thou wilt eſteem and love as thy brother every man who acts and thinks like a man, and acknowledge only intrinſic and ſubſtantial excellence as honourable in thyſelf and others.

But here mayſt thou likewiſe learn more juſtly to think and to judge of the deſtination of man. When thou there conſidereſt how many and how various the toilſome and continued labours, how many the hands and faculties that are requiſite for fertilizing the earth, for procuring food and cloathing for its inhabitants, and for ſupplying their primary moſt preſſing wants; canſt thou then poſſibly doubt that man was deſigned for an active and buſy life, for a due application and exertion of his powers! Canſt thou then poſſibly think, that he ſufficiently fulfills the intention of his being, when he ſedulouſly ſhuns whatever bears the name of labour; accounts all ſtated, continued work as hardſhip and conſtraint; paſſes his days in indolent repoſe, in a delicate reſervation of his faculties; or employs himſelf barely in fruitleſs ſpeculations or idle reſearches, which have no influence on the welfare of human ſociety? Canſt thou poſſibly imagine that men who thus think and act can claim any juſt precedence above the huſband-

man? Or canſt thou then doubt of the great importance both of him and his vocation? Canſt thou refuſe him the eſteem and the gratitude he deſerves? No, the cultivation of the earth is the firſt, the moſt natural, the moſt neceſſary, the nobleſt and moſt honourable condition and calling of man; and he that deſpiſes this ſtation of life, deſpiſes the ordinance of God, and forgets to what purpoſes man was deſigned by his creator.

O thou who conſumeſt in town the products of the country, forget not from whence the food thou enjoyeſt, the beverage that refreſhes thee, the cloathing thou weareſt, proceed, whence and by whom they are prepared and adapted to thy uſe; and deſpiſe them not who render thee this eſſential, this indiſpenſable ſervice! Honour the huſbandman as thy ſteward and provider; oppreſs him not with rigorous ſervices, with ſevere exactions, and ſtill leſs with the burden of contempt, ſo hard to be borne; for he too has the manly, the moral ſenſe, and that very frequently leſs impaired or vitiated than the generality of the inhabitants of populous towns. Honour him as thy elder brother, who provides for the whole family, proſecutes their moſt laborious affairs, and thereby leaves his younger brethren time and leiſure and ability, to provide for the conveniences rather than the neceſſaries of life, and to invent and to enjoy a variety of more refined pleaſures. Yes, honour agriculture, as the prime, the peculiar ſource of wealth, as the firmeſt ſupport of

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the commonweal, without which neither arts, nor ſciences, nor trade, without which even thy civic luxury and ſplendor could not ſubſiſt; and, if thou haſt no means, no calling, no occaſion, to purſue arts and ſciences, trade and commerce, or to ſerve in what are termed the higher ſtations of the world; then haſte thee back to thy primitive vocation, to the culture of the ground; and believe that thou art more agreeable in the ſight of God, thy maſter, and far more honourable in the eyes of thy intelligent brethren, than if, ſwoln with vanity and pride, thou waſte thy time and thy faculties, and require to reap where thou haſt not ſown!

This is not all, my chriſtian brother! Even in a view to the ſuperior deſtination of man when we have done with this terreſtrial life, our ſojourn in the country, and our converſe with its inhabitants, may be very inſtructive. How many mental powers, how many great and happy diſpoſitions, how many generous ſentiments, wilt thou there diſcover, of which, in their confined and narrow ſphere, in their ſimple and uniform train of affairs, but few can be exerted, applied, employed, or uſed in the degree and extent to which they are adapted! How many heads, which for ſagacity, for ingenuity, for docility, for extending or improving ſome of the ſciences, or by ſtate-policy, would have rendered themſelves conſpicuous, had they been produced in different circumſtances, and in other connections! How many hearts, ſuſceptible of the nobleſt and

moſt

moſt effective benevolence, which might have felt and provided for the happineſs of many thouſands, if they were not thus totally deſtitute of the proper means and opportunities! How many perſons, who live and die in the deepeſt obſcurity, that would have attracted the attention or admiration of all beholders, had they been placed on a more ſpacious ſtage! And ſhall not theſe powers, theſe diſpoſitions, be unfolded in another life? Shall theſe generous ſentiments never be able to exhibit themſelves in action? Shall all theſe active and improvable minds, all theſe ſenſible hearts, all theſe eminently good and uſeful human creatures, ſhall they never be what, from the ſeed-plot of them, they might be and become? Has their creator made ſuch great preparatives for ſo poor a purpoſe; can he have laviſhed ſo much power of production for ſuch trifling effects? Couldſt thou expect this of him whom all nature proclaims to be ſupremely wiſe? No, the more undeveloped capacities, the more reſtricted faculties, the more unfiniſhed human intellects, thou meeteſt among thy brethren; the more certain mayſt thou be of their immortality and of thine own, of their and thine everlaſting progreſs towards higher perfection.

Very inſtructive to the reflecting man, is thirdly his ſojourn in the country, in regard to what is termed happineſs. Here ſeeſt thou, o man, thouſands of thy brethren and ſiſters, dwelling not in palaces, not in houſes adorned with the beauties of art;

art; who partake of no coſtly diſhes artificially prepared; who wear no ſumptuous and ſplendid apparel; who loll on no luxurious couches; who yet in their humble cottages, with their ordinary food, in their ſimple attire, on their hard beds, find much comfort and joy and nouriſhment and recreation, who probably find in all theſe a greater reliſh, than thou in the enjoyment of affluence and ſuperfluity. Here ſeeſt thou thouſands of thy brothers and ſiſters, who are daily employed in the moſt laborious, toilſome, and which appear to thee the moſt diſagreeable and painful occupations; and who yet are cheerful at their work and contented with their condition: perſons who are totally unacquainted with all thy exquiſite delicacies, and with the generality of thy refined entertainments; and yet complain neither of languor, nor of the want of amuſement and paſtimes: men, whom the genial ſentiment of their health and powers, the view of beautiful nature, the proſpect of a plentiful harveſt, an abundant production of the fruits of the orchard, the peaceful enjoyment of the refreſhing evening breeze, the familiar table-talk, and the feſtive rejoicings on holidays and ſundays, more than compenſate for the want of thy ſplendid diſtinctions; men, in ſhort, who may be very confined even in their religious notions, and probably are erroneous in many reſpects; but adhere to what they know and believe, and conſole and refreſh themſelves by meditations on God and the world to come, on numberleſs occaſions,

caſions, wherein thou who knoweſt, or pretendeſt to know more, art driven and toſſed from doubt to doubt, and no where findeſt peace.

Here oh learn what real happineſs is, by what means and in what path thou mayſt ſeek and find it. Here learn that happineſs is not confined to affluence; does not conſiſt in outward glare; not in rank and titles; not in a ſoft, luxurious, idle, inactive life; not in a perpetual round of amuſements; not in the unhappy means of hearkening to every childiſh fooliſh fancy, and in exploring the methods of its gratification. No, learn that it conſiſts in the genial ſenſe and the alert application of our faculties, in an active and buſy life, in the due diſcharge of the duties of our calling, in the controul of our deſires, in the diminution of our artificial wants; to know that it conſiſts in contentedneſs of heart and in the conſoling apprehenſion of God and the better world hereafter; that it therefore is far more dependent on ourſelves and our manner of viewing and judging of objects, than on our outward circumſtances and the regard we draw; and that no man is utterly ſecluded from the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of it, be his ſtation in life what it may.

Learn therefore with ſhame to diſmiſs thy complaints, and no longer accuſe the creator and father of the univerſe; accuſe thyſelf and thy froward taſte, and thy exorbitant deſires, and thy ſervile propenſity to imitation, and thy falſe, perverted judgment on the worth of things, and the weakneſs

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by which thou ſuffereſt thyſelf to be deceived by appearance and ſhow, or ſwayed by ſenſeleſs faſhion, and the waſte or abuſe of thy more extenſive knowledge — theſe things accuſe; in theſe things change and correct thyſelf, if thou art not happy, or only happy in a leſſer degree than thou mightſt with all the ſources of happineſs which nature, art, ſociety and religion open to thee. And when thou haſt learned this, thou haſt learned the art which is the moſt important of all, the art of being cheerful, pleaſed and happy and of conſtantly becoming more ſo.

So inſtructive, my pious hearers, may the time we paſs in the country be to us, and ſo inſtructive it actually is to the man of reflection. Thus to him what appears to be no more than recreation and pleaſure, will prove a copious ſpring of wiſdom. Thus will he at once invigorate both his mind and his body, the health of the one and at the ſame time the health of the other. Thus does he draw nigh unto God, his creator, his father; learn to behold and apprehend him in all his works; and to rectify his judgment on the worth and deſtination of man, and on his real felicity. May we all reap theſe experiences to our own information and improvement, from our excurſions into the country; and on every freſh occaſion in more abundant meaſure!

SERMON XXXIII.

The Value of Domeſtic Happineſs.

GOD, eternal, inexhauſtible fountain of all happineſs and joy, how various, how abundant are the ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure which thou haſt opened to us thy children, and to the enjoyment whereof thou inviteſt us by thy good providence! If thou have beſet our path of life with numerous obſtructions and difficulties for our diſcipline and correction, yet haſt thou embelliſhed it with numberleſs beauties and ſatisfactions which impart to us courage and ſtrength to vanquiſh thoſe difficulties. If thou lay upon us ſometimes heavy duties, toilſome buſineſſes, ſevere afflictions; thou doſt mitigate and alleviate them to us by ſtill more various and greater recreations and comforts. Yes, we may, we ſhould be even here on earth delighted and happy; and if we are not ſo, it is by our own fault. In the capacities, in means, in opportunities, in encouragements to it, thou letteſt none of us be wanting. But too frequently we let ourſelves be wanting

wanting in the wife and faithful use of that which in its native tendencies by thy decrees would make us happy! But too often we allow ourselves to be cheated by the semblance of things; disdain truth and wisdom and virtue, the only sure guides to happiness; and are submissively misled by error, by folly and vice into the road of trouble and misery. And then we doubt of thy goodness, murmur at thy constitutions and dispensations, and complain of the lamentable lot of humanity! God, how unjust are we frequently towards thee, and how inimical to ourselves! Ah, forgive us our transgressions, most merciful father, and lead us back from our deviations. Let the light of truth dissipate the errors and prejudices that so often misguide us. Teach us ever better to know and more worthily to use the wise and kind provisions thou hast made for our happiness. Grant that we may all seek and find it there where thou wilt that we should seek and find it, and let us all become constantly more intelligent and good, and thereby more qualified for its enjoyment. Bless to this purpose the meditations that are now to employ our thoughts. Enable us to perceive the happiness of domestic life, to which we are called by thee, in its real form, and derive from it all the felicity that it is capable of procuring us. Grant our requests, which we implore of thee in the name of our saviour Jesus, and entirely relying on his promises and resigned

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to thy will, in his own words we further pray for ourſelves and for others to thee: Our father, &c.

MATTH. xxi. 17.

And he left them, and went out of the city into Bethany, and he lodged there.

IT not unfrequently happens, that man goes to a diſtance in ſearch of what lies by him, for what is inviting him at home to immediate enjoyment; and this is commonly the reaſon that he either does not find what he ſeeks for at all, or not ſo complete as he could wiſh. Thus all mankind are in queſt of ſatisfaction and happineſs. But probably they leaſt ſearch for it where it would be the moſt eaſily, the moſt certainly, and the moſt completely found. They overlook or diſdain the ſources of it which lie neareſt to them, and are already in their poſſeſſion; which no man can debar them from, no man can render taſteleſs or conteſtable; which flow indeed without noiſe, but in a copious and uninterrupted ſtream: and rove about in anxious perplexity after others, which can only be diſcovered with great labour, only ſparingly enjoyed, from which they cannot always, from which they can but ſeldom draw undiſturbed, can never entirely ſlake their thirſt, and often run the hazard of taking

taking in bitterneſs and death with the waters of them. I will ſpeak without a metaphor. Mankind too often ſeek their principal pleaſure, their whole felicity, in what is called the great world, in numerous and brilliant companies, in diſtracting and faſcinating amuſements, in extenſive connections with ſuch perſons as are diſtinguiſhed by their rank, their train, their opulence, their luxuries, and their magnificence, and live ſumptuouſly every day, or rather ſeem as if they lived. Too often do they run from one ſuch glittering circle to another, from one ſuch company of counterfeit freedom and joy to another, in hopes of aſſuaging their thirſt for pleaſure and happineſs. But how ſeldom do they there find what they ſeek! How much ſeldomer do they find it ſo pure, ſo complete, as they expected! How oft do they there miſtake the ſhadow for the ſubſtance, appearance for reality, and find themſelves lamentably and ſhamefully deceived in their moſt flattering expectations! And how much more eaſily and ſatisfactorily, how much more ſincerely and completely might they have found and enjoyed this pleaſure and happineſs, if they had been contented to look for it, not ſo far off, but nearer at hand; not in noiſe, but in quiet; not in what depends on mere accident, but is in their own power; in ſhort, if they had ſought for it in domeſtic life?

Yes, in this little unrenowned circle, there is far more real, ſolid joy, than in grand and brilliant

companies; more happineſs and greater variety of it is to be found in this ſmall round of occupations and pleaſures than on the vaſt theatre of glaring ſhows and tumultuous diverſions. Here, in the enjoyment of domeſtic happineſs, it is that the wiſe man, the chriſtian, principally ſeeks and finds refreſhment, recreation and pleaſure. Here even our lord, whoſe taſte and ſentiments were in all reſpects ſo humane and generous, ſought and found them. Wearied by the labours of the day, and the contradictions of his enemies, he left them, as our text informs us, and went out of the city into Bethany, there to participate in the peace and comfort of a family united together by the tendereſt affection, the family of Lazarus and his ſiſters, and to increaſe their ſatisfactions by his preſence and converſe. This humble abode of domeſtic happineſs he preferred to the lofty palaces of the great, to the feſtivities of the rich and the riotous mirth of the voluptuous. Happy they, who in this reſpect likewiſe are ſo minded as Jeſus was! They can never be deficient in real felicity.

Yes, my dear friends, great, uncommonly great, is the value of domeſtic happineſs! But infinitely greater to them who know it by experience, than to ſuch as are only acquainted with it from deſcription. May I be enabled to do juſtice to it at leaſt in my repreſentation! In order to this, let us enter upon two inquiries. The firſt, how ſhould domeſtic life be conſtituted, that it may have a great

value? The other, what gives it this value; or, wherein does it conſiſt?

Domeſtic life, like all other external goods, is not neceſſarily and of itſelf, but only under certain conditions, in particular circumſtances, a real advantage and a ſource of true felicity. Home is but too frequently rendered the ſeat of tireſomeneſs and diſguſt; the ſcene of low and ungoverned paſſions; the abode of vexation, of ill-humour, of various diſſentions, of petulance and malice; not ſeldom an actual place of torment. This is always more or leſs the caſe, where wiſdom and virtue are not of the party, and do not animate the occupations and pleaſures of domeſtic life. Only there where wiſdom and virtue dwell, where intelligent, well-meaning perſons live together, only there dwell peace, ſatisfaction and joy; it is they alone that make either a cottage or a palace the receptacle of pleaſure; only by their means is any family, whether great or ſmall, rendered capable of happineſs. For only the intelligent and good can tell what ſolid happineſs implies; none but they have either the taſte or ſentiment proper for it; it is they alone that eſtimate things by their real value, and know how to enjoy above all things what is true and beautiful and good, uneſteemed and unknown as it may be in the great world, and among ſuch as are not ſuſceptible of the more delicate ſenſations. To them a word that overflows from the fulneſs of the heart, a look that indicates the ſoul,

an inſtance of tender aſſiduity, an inconſiderable but guileleſs action, an unimportant act of kindneſs but performed from real affection, a calm and ſilent ſentiment of friendſhip, a free effuſion of a man's thoughts and ſentiments into the boſom of his family, is of more worth than the reiterated proteſtations of civility and regard, than all the flattering encomiums and blandiſhments, than all the friendly ſmiles and geſtures, than all the ſplendid entertainments in which the glory and happineſs of the generality of large companies conſiſt.

Wherever domeſtic happineſs is found, it ſhews us perſons who are connected together by real, intrinſic love and friendſhip, who live entirely by each other, and who ſeek their happineſs, their honour, and their force, in the mutual union of their hearts. Whatever each has and ſays and does and enjoys, how he is inclined, and whatever befalls him can and muſt be of importance only to perſons of this deſcription. They alone know how to conſider the advantages of one with undeviating complacency; to obſerve the infirmities and failings of another without diſlike; to reprove the indiſcretions of a third with inoffenſive gentleneſs; to underſtand the looks of each; to prevent the wants and wiſhes of all; mutually to comply with the deſigns of each other; to harmonize with the feelings of the reſt; and to rejoice heartily in all the ſucceſſes, even the moſt inconſiderable, that happen to each other. Wherever frigidity of temper and

and untractableneſs, where jealouſy and envy prevail, there no real happineſs is poſſible, in the narrow circle of daily intercourſe.

Laſtly, domeſtic happineſs ſuppoſes a taſte for truth, for nature, for graceful ſimplicity, for ſerene repoſe; as they are in contraſt with error and art, ſtudied and forced pleaſures, and the more oſtentatious and poignant diverſions. That pure and generous taſte alone can give any value to the comforts of domeſtic life, and, to ſuch as underſtand and enjoy it, render all its concerns important and delightful, as the ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure. For, in this caſe, they ariſe, not ſo much from the objects, as from the eye that beholds them and the heart that feels them; not ſo much from the importance of the tranſactions and incidents themſelves, as from the natural and ſpontaneous manner in which they ariſe, and the pleaſing intereſt taken in them. To perſons of a ſound judgment and an uncorrupted heart, the cheerful countenance of the ſpouſe, the liſping of the infants, the mirthful ſports of the children, the ſight of reaſon in its bud and in its bloſſom; to them the earneſt curioſity of one, the innocent vivacity of another, the growth and improvement of a third, the contentedneſs of all, is a ſcene far preferable, with all its privacy and ſimplicity, to any other however intricately conducted or ſplendidly performed; to them the ſilent and placid exiſtence in a ſociety of open affection, of unreſtrained and unobtruſive

benevolence and love, to hearts that are able to melt, is a mode of exiſtence which they would not exchange for any of thoſe that are ſo much prized and envied by the multitude.

This once premiſed, my pious hearers, the happineſs of domeſtic life has doubtleſs a great, a conſpicuouſly great value. Let us now ſee what gives it this value, or wherein it conſiſts.

The comfort of domeſtic life is, in the firſt place, the moſt agreeable relief from the burden and heat of the day and its frequently tireſome buſineſs; the ſweeteſt recompence for the work we have finiſhed, probably after much toil, great exertions, much oppoſition, and at laſt finiſhed without ſucceſs. Here peace, recreation, ſoft retreat, await the father, the mother, the individuals of the family, after they have finiſhed, perhaps in the ſweat of their brow, the labours of the day. And the cool duſk of the evening cannot be more welcome to the weary traveller than the relaxation they enjoy in the boſom of their family. Here the man of profound ſcience unbends his mind, amuſes himſelf with the agreeable images he receives from without; lowers himſelf to the comprehenſion of the chattering infant, to the underſtanding of each of his children; watches and cheriſhes every indication of a ſound mind and good heart as it ſprings forth, and ſurrenders himſelf to every conception, to every emotion that preſents itſelf unſought for to him. Here the man of buſineſs forgets his complicated

complicated concerns; diſmiſſes his troubles for a time; if he cannot entirely baniſh them, receives comfort and encouragement from the partner of his ſoul; and his heart expands, his countenance brightens, and troubles and cares flee away, till he has collected freſh vigour to reſume his burdens, or rid himſelf of them. Here the ſcholar breaks off the thread of his inveſtigations; ſteps out of the labyrinth in which he had probably entangled himſelf; and often finds, in the enjoyment of the innocence and ingenuous ſimplicity of his offspring, more truth and more inward tranquillity, more aliment for his mind and heart, than all the learning and all the arts in the world could give him. Here every man ſees and is ſenſible for whom he has been at work, for whom he has been exerting his faculties; and rejoices the more over what he has done, as thoſe who are to reap the fruits of it are the dearer to his ſoul. Here every man receives the praiſe and applauſe he deſerves, and receives it from the perſons whoſe approbation and praiſe are everything to him. Here the drooping are raiſed, the faulty corrected, the ſlothful excited, the afflicted conſoled, and ſatisfaction by degrees is diffuſed over all. And where then, my friend, my brother, where wilt thou where canſt thou ſeek and find this happineſs, this recreation, this reward, if thou find it not in domeſtic life?

The happineſs of domeſtic life is farther quiet, peaceful ſelf-enjoyment; a ſelf-enjoyment that is multiplied and ennobled by the intimate participation in all the concernments of this truſty ſociety. Here a man returns from diſtraction and diſſipation to himſelf; feels his exiſtence; has a clear, diſtinct, internal conſcioufneſs of what he is and poſſeſſes, and lives more in himſelf and for himſelf, and in them and for them who are neareſt to his proper ſelf, than in outward things. Here what we are in reference to the ſociety at large, and for which we muſt ſo often forget what we identically are, comes into no conſideration; we put off our titles and poſts and dignities and borrowed diſtinctions, as robes of ceremony, which are as often an incumbrance as an ornament to us; we return to our natural ſtate of liberty, play no artificial character, repreſent no foreign perſonage; think, ſpeak, act entirely according to our own peculiar turn, as our ſenſations ariſe, and appear what we actually are, and nothing elſe. Here a man feels and preſents himſelf as a man, the ſpouſe as the ſpouſe, the parent as the parent, the child as the child, the friend as the friend; but no one as ſovereign or as ſubject, no one as the ſtateſman, or as the prelate, or as the public teacher, or as the merchant, or in any other reference to ſtation and calling. And how bleſſed is this inward unadulterated ſentiment of humanity, this ſerene enjoyment of real intrinſic perfection and dignity, independent

dependent on outward things! How much more bleſſed than any participation in the ſtunning turbulence and dazzling ſplendour of the great world! How many innocent, humane, generous emotions here ariſe and are diſplayed, which, in the ordinary hurry of buſineſs and diſſipation, ſlumber in the receſſes of the ſoul, as if in covert from the ſcorn and deriſion of the vain or the wicked! And is not this to be properly called living, fully to enjoy one's life, and to be glad and rejoice in it, like a rational being, with conſciouſneſs and conſideration?

The happineſs of domeſtic life is thirdly the delightful, free, and intimate aſſociation between harmonious and mutually loving ſouls. Hence vaniſh all the conſtraints of art, of faſhion, of affectation, of received uſages and ceremonies; all fear of cruel cenſure, of galling reproof, or bitter jeers; all anxious reſerve; all weariſome attention to a thouſand indifferent, inſignificant trifles. Here every one ſhews himſelf in his own native colours, without needing to conceal even his harmleſs weakneſſes, his actual imperfections and failings. Here one heart unfolds itſelf to another; and every reflection, every ſentiment, is transferred, undiſguiſed, unaltered in its full truth and force, from one to the other. Here no ſorrow, no care, no wiſh, no joy, no hope, remains ſhut up in the receſſes of the heart; but, by free and reciprocal communication, every ſorrow is mitigated, every care diminiſhed, every worthy deſire encouraged, every joy redoubled and heightened,

ed, every hope becomes actual enjoyment. Here each exchanges what he has for what another poſſeſſes, alternately beſtowing and receiving information and comfort and force and ſatisfaction and ſerenity; while all feel themſelves richer and greater and ſtronger and happier, for what they are and poſſeſs in common. And where, my dear friends, where can theſe effuſions, theſe communications of the heart have place, with ſo much careleſs freedom, and to ſo wide an extent, as in domeſtic life? What a value then muſt the happineſs of it thus acquire in the eyes of every man who loves nature and truth, who has a humane, a tender, a communicative heart, and yet finds ſo little matter for its nouriſhment beyond the circle of his familiar friends?

And ſtill how many other agreeable circumſtances and advantages are connected with this happineſs, which greatly enhance the value of it!

The happineſs of domeſtic life is fourthly inexhauſtible. It renews itſelf daily, it multiplies itſelf without end. As much as nature is more diverſified and richer than art, ſo much more various and abundant in pleaſures and joys is this happineſs than any other. Here are no fixt boundaries, no determinate methods, how and to what extent a man ſhall pleaſe and delight himſelf. As various as are the employments, the tranſactions and the events of human life, and as various as the revolutions that daily obtain in regard of all theſe things; juſt ſo various alſo are the objects of friendly intercourſe, and

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the familiar converſe of domeſtic life. As inexhauſtible as the thinking principle of the human mind, and the ſenſitive faculty of the human heart, ſo inexhauſtible are the ſources of delight that here ſtand open. Here no good word that is uttered falls to the ground; here no act is without reaction; no idea that is not apprehended, no teſtimony of affection that is not returned, no civility that is not repaid, no ſatisfaction that is not enjoyed by all, no emotion that is not transfuſed into every heart. Here the recollection of the paſt and the proſpect of the future are intimately combined in the enjoyment of the preſent; all together form but one highly intereſting whole; all take a lively part in all: and how much muſt the agreeable employment and the pleaſures of each by this means be multiplied! How much more than there, where only certain kinds of pleaſure or amuſement are to be found, which always wear the ſame aſpect, and always return with the ſame reſtrictions; where a man is ſo ſeldom thoroughly underſtood; ſo often gives his words to the wind; ſo often exhibits thoughts and emotions, wherein none coincide either in opinion or ſenſation; ſo often excites envy by his contentedneſs, and dark looks by his cheerful mien; and where commonly the moſt ſeparate, and not unfrequently the moſt oppoſite intereſts actuate all the individuals of the ſociety! No wonder then, if pleaſure often fails, and its dull monotony renders it ſtill oftener inſipid!

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The happineſs of domeſtic life compenſates the want of any other; but no other can compenſate the want of that. Let the world, let thy countrymen withhold from thee the juſtice, the reſpect and eſteem that are due to thy merits; repay thy ſervices with indifference and ingratitude: how ſpeedily wilt thou forget theſe ſlights, or theſe injuries, on returning to the boſom of thy family, on being received by them with open arms and open hearts, and in paſſing among them for what thou really art, obtaining the approbation which is truly thy deſert, and in feeling the whole worth of their attachment and love! Has all the glittering tinſel of the great world, all the magnificence of the court, all the triumph of eminence and power, left thy heart empty and cold; has the farce of diſſimulation, of artifice, of falſehood, of childiſh vanity that was there performed, wearied and diſguſted thee: how ſoon does thy deadened heart expand itſelf as thou enterеſt the doors of thy houſe; how ſoon does it feel a mild and genial warmth in the circle of thy wife and thy children and friends; how ſoon do the ſincerity, the frankneſs, the affability, the innocence which there prevail, reſtore thy ſoul, and reconcile thee to the human race! — On the other hand, be as full as thou wilt of the bounties of fortune; be the darling of the great; be the idol of the people; be the oracle of the politeſt companies; be even great and rich thyſelf; preſide over as many others as thou canſt; but if thy habitation be the ſeat of diſcord and

jealouſy,

jealouſy, and thy domeſtic life deny thee the peace, the ſatisfaction, the pleaſure it yields to the wife and good: how little will every outward and dazzling circumſtance of fortune make thee amends for this eſſential inward defect! How much will this one defect embitter the enjoyment of every ſpecies of ſucceſs! How hard and intolerable will the burden of it be!

Add to this, that the enjoyment of domeſtic happineſs is always not leſs edifying and uſeful than pleaſant. It is here a man learns the true ends of his being; here he is taught rightly to appretiate the value of all the goods of life; here he is convinced of the emptineſs of grandeur, of pomp, of rank and ſtation. Here he is taught to think, and feel, and act like a reaſonable creature; learns to forget his outward diſtinctions, and to ſee them in their proper light, more as toys and baubles, or even incumbrances, than as things in themſelves deſirable. Here all hearts are united, and ever uniting cloſer; the one becomes ſtill dearer to the other, each is always increaſingly ready and willing to aſſiſt and ſerve the reſt; all collect new avidity and new powers to anſwer the obligations of their calling, more and more to deſerve the eſteem and applauſe of the others, and thereby to promote the welfare of the whole community, which is but one heart and one ſoul. With what zeal muſt the father and the mother of the family be animated in their affairs, of what perſeverance will they not be capable, while

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they taſte the fruit of their induſtry in the enjoyment of domeſtic happineſs, in jocund converſe with their children, and provide themſelves daily, by patient induſtry, with ſucceſſive ſatisfactions and pleaſures! What an incitement muſt this be to the faithful diſcharge of their duties! And muſt not thoſe pleaſures be of extraordinary value, which inſtruct and improve whoſoever enjoys them?

Still more. To the enjoyment of domeſtic happineſs, no troubleſome, no expenſive preparatory proviſions and arrangements are needful. It may be enjoyed at all ſeaſons, in every moment of life. No ſooner does the hour of ſocial recreation, the glad hour of meeting again, the moment of finiſhed labour arrive, but with them enter cheerfulneſs and mirth into this happy circle. No ſooner does the want of this pleaſure make itſelf felt, but the means of ſatisfying it are ready at hand. Caprice and ill-humour, and a thouſand pretended or real obſtructions and detentions, which defeat the ſchemes of pleaſure among people of faſhion, have little influence here. The inclination of one is the inclination of the other. This cheerfully beſtows what he has, and as cheerfully and gratefully accepts what another gives him. When one is glad, gladneſs inſpires them all; when one of them enters to the reſt with a brightened countenance, joy beams from the faces of all. When one has done ſome good or obtained ſome ſucceſs, and imparts it to the objects of his affection, it is as if all as well as he had done or enjoyed

enjoyed it. What advantages have ſuch pleaſures and joys above thoſe that have often perhaps conſumed whole weeks in planning, arranging, expecting them; then by repugnance or accident are ſtill longer poſtponed; and at laſt, in a few hours, are over and gone, and very ſeldom produce what they promiſed!

To the enjoyment of domeſtic happineſs as little of art and dexterity is requiſite as of preparation and arrangement. It is entirely the work of nature and ſincerity; not the effect of preconcerted plans, of ſtudied parts, of an anxious obſervance of the rules of propriety, and the modes that prevail for the day. A ſound mind, and a good affectionate heart, is all, my chriſtian brother, that is required for the enjoyment of this felicity. The leſs conſtraint thou here putteſt on thy mind and thy heart; the more freely thou alloweſt them both to act: the more purely and perfectly wilt thou enjoy this happineſs. Though in the great world both of them muſt crouch under the yoke of faſhion, and the mind can ſeldom venture to think aloud, and the heart ſeldom dares to indulge its emotions; yet here they may both follow their bent unimpeded and free, and exert their powers and qualities, in ſuch manner and degree as is ſuitable to the inward impulſe and the preſent occaſion.

This alſo, my pious hearers, gives the happineſs of domeſtic life a great advantage, that the enjoyment of it is never attended by ſatiety or diſguſt, by ſorrow

ſorrow or remorſe. It is real enjoyment; and the ſincerity of it conſtantly maintains its worth. It is innocent enjoyment; and innocence fears no reproach. It is ſocial, affectionate enjoyment, which excites no jealouſy, attracts no envy; by which no one is injured, with which none are unſatisfied, from which none are ſent empty away, and all are contented with each other. It is an enjoyment that is grateful to our Father in heaven, which is not diſturbed but exalted by the apprehenſion of his preſence, and which often conſiſts in a godly and joyful ſenſe of his bounty, in the heart-felt worſhip and praiſe of that exalted being. After this pure enjoyment, theſe lofty pleaſures, you have nothing to fear in calling yourſelf to account; you need not be aſhamed of what you have ſpoken or done; you will have no cauſe to think of appeaſing thoſe you have affronted, or of repairing the injury you have done to your brother; will cheerfully think on God, on your immortality, on the world to come. Reſt and ſleep will not ſhun your embraces; but you will the more completely reliſh the comforts of them both, and delightful viſions of the innocent pleaſures you have enjoyed will frequently even there be floating in your mind. — And can you boaſt of this, you that ſeek your ſolace and happineſs principally in great and ſhining companies, in loud tumultuous pleaſures, in places of thronged reſort? Have ye never lamented the preparatives, the expenſe, the time, the pains you have beſtowed upon them?

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Are ye not frequently far more languid and dull on returning from them than when you went to them? Have not often perturbation and concern about the conſequences of what has paſſed, or reproaches for your indiſcretions, accompanied you to your dwelling? Have they not often, for a longer or a ſhorter time, deſtroyed your peace? Have they not often incapacitated you for prayer, or rendered it irkſome to you? And if you have experienced this, and do ſo ſtill, then confeſs the advantages which the quiet, innocent ſatisfactions of domeſtic life poſſeſs over yours.

Laſtly, the happineſs of domeſtic life is reſtricted to no claſs of men. It is attached neither to ſtation, nor to opulence, nor to elevation and power; confined neither to the palace nor to the cottage. It may be enjoyed by all mankind, by perſons of every rank, of every age, in every place. The ſources of it ſtand open to all; to the poor no leſs than to the rich, to the low as well as to the high, to youth and age alike; everyone may draw from theſe wells, and everyone draw pleaſure to his heart's content. And which is that external boon that in this reſpect may be compared to the happineſs of domeſtic life? How few perſons are able to acquire an aſcendency over others! How few to ſhine in the ſplendours of exalted ſtation! How few to obtain wealth and opulence! How few to raiſe themſelves above others by perſonal diſtinctions, or by arts and erudition, or by great and heroic exploits, and ſolace themſelves

with the applauſe and admiration of their contemporaries! But all intelligent and good perſons, the ſervant as well as his maſter, the countryman as well as the citizen, the unlearned as well as the ſcholar, all may enjoy the happineſs of domeſtic life, and may enjoy it in its full perfection. It is human ſentiment, it is human happineſs, which every creature that is human has an equal right to enjoy, and the ſame means to obtain. And what a great, what an eminently great value muſt this confer upon it!

Now lay all this together, my pious hearers. Conſider, what an agreeable relaxation from labour, and requital for it, what a calm and ſerene ſelf-enjoyment, what a free delightful communication of our inmoſt thoughts and feelings, the enjoyment of domeſtic happineſs is; conſider that it is as diverſified as inexhauſtible; that it makes up for the want of every other happineſs, but can never be itſelf ſupplied by any; that while it is ſo pleaſant, it is alſo inſtructive and uſeful; that to the enjoyment of it neither great preparations nor peculiar dexterity and addreſs are required; that it draws after it neither diſguſt nor remorſe; and that in fine it is peculiar to no condition of men, but is capable of being enjoyed by everyone: and ſay, after all, whether you know of any other external that has a greater worth than this, or even a worth ſo great?

No, my dear friends, if you would enjoy pleaſure, innocent, pure, daily-renewing, never diſgracing, never cloying; delights worthy of the man and

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the chriſtian: ſeek them not at a diſtance from you, ſince they lie at home; ſeek them not in things which are not in your power, but in what is more your own; ſeek them in the happineſs of domeſtic life. If you may venture to expect them anywhere, it is certainly there they muſt be found!

SERMON XXXIV.

The Value of Friendſhip.

GOD, eternal, inexhauſtible ſource of affection and happineſs, what joys, what felicities haſt thou prepared for us, by forming us capable of affection towards each other, and of elevating that affection to pure and generous friendſhip! What a counterbalance to all the troubles and burdens of life haſt thou given us therein! Affording us a genial light through the rougheſt and gloomieſt paths of it! Yes, all the diſpoſitions, all the energies, all the propenſities and inſtincts which thou haſt planted in our nature, are good; they all teſtify that thou loveſt us with parental tenderneſs, that thou haſt not ordained us to grief, but to joy; not to miſery, but to happineſs! Might only all theſe diſpoſitions be unfolded, theſe energies be ſo exerted, theſe propenſities acquire ſuch a direction, and theſe inſtincts be ſo ennobled as is conformable to thy gracious and paternal intentions towards us! Might wiſdom and virtue, might the light of religion herein

herein direct and guide us, and lead us all to the perfection and happineſs whereof we are capable! How many unjuſt and culpable complaints of human miſery would then be done away! How ſatisfied, how bleſſed ſhould we be in the ſocial and cheerful enjoyment of thy bounties! How greatly ſhould we facilitate by mutual affection and friendſhip our progreſs on the way of duty and virtue, and how much more certainly and completely reach the end of our being! God, do thou ſend the ſpirit of love, of pure and generous love into our hearts! Open the avenues of them to the charms of virtuous friendſhip. Enable us clearly to perceive and intimately to feel its excellent value; and purify us from all low, ſelfiſh inclinations and paſſions that are in oppoſition to it. God, thou art for ever leading all to thy ſupreme deſign, to univerſal good; to approach nearer to thee, the ſun of being, the boundleſs, unimpaired centre of minds, the father of ſpirits, and to unite ever cloſer the one to the other, is the perpetual tendency of all intelligent, ſenſible beings, is alſo the aſpiration of human ſouls! May we be ever becoming more ſuſceptible of this happineſs in both reſpects, and be ever deriving more felicity from this ſource of life. Bleſs to that end the contemplations we now propoſe to begin upon it. Give force to our reflections, and enable them to penetrate us with virtuous, generous ſentiments and feelings. For this we preſent our ſupplications to thee, as the votaries of thy ſon Jeſus, our ever bleſſed

deliverer and lord; and, firmly relying on his promiſes, addreſs thee further as he preſcribed: Our father, &c.

PROV. xviii. 24.

There is a friend that ſticketh cloſer than a brother.

CHRISTIANITY has frequently been reproached as unfavourable to friendſhip, ſince it does not expreſsly inculcate it; preſcribing indeed to its followers benevolence towards all, univerſal kindneſs and brotherly love, but not diſcriminate friendſhip. Friendſhip, however, is not properly a duty, not an indiſpenſable obligation for all; it is not to be commanded, like juſtice and general kindneſs; its riſe, its direction very frequently depends on circumſtances and incidents that are not in our own power; and even very intelligent and worthy perſons, of a ſenſible and friendly heart, may and often muſt, without any fault of theirs, forego the happineſs of friendſhip, I mean ſtrict and cordial friendſhip. At the ſame time it muſt be confeſſed, that the more a man opens his heart to univerſal benevolence, to philanthropy and brotherly love, thoſe great commandments of the chriſtian law; the more he allows himſelf to be governed by the ſpirit of them: the more adapted and diſpoſed will he be to even the moſt

moſt noble and moſt exalted friendſhip. Nay, friendſhip would be a very general virtue, and the whole ſociety of chriſtians a band of friends intimately united together, if they all inviolably conformed to the precepts of that doctrine which they confeſs, and ſuffered themſelves to be actuated by its ſpirit.

Of this, what we know concerning the founder of chriſtianity and its primitive confeſſors, will not allow us to doubt. When we ſee Jeſus repay the gentle, tender, affectionate diſpoſition of his diſciple John with diſtinguiſhed affection and confidence, when we ſee this diſciple ſo often leaning on his breaſt, and hear him continually called the diſciple whom he loved, when we ſee our lord ſelecting the houſe of his friend Lazarus as his place of refuge and recreation; when we hear him ſay to his attendants, "Our friend Lazarus ſleepeth, but I go to awake him;" when he afterwards haſtens to his grave, weeps at the ſight of his body, and the beholders exclaim, "See how he loved him!" when we behold the ſympathy and compaſſion which marked the friend of the human race, when he lays aſide the more dazzling glories of his character, and mingles his tears with thoſe of his friends, how can we entertain the leaſt doubt of the friendly diſpoſition of Jeſus, or think that ſuch a diſpoſition is at variance with his ſpirit and his doctrine? — And the connection that ſubſiſted between Jeſus and his diſciples and followers in general, cer-

tainly preſents us with an example of the moſt generous friendſhip. How indulgent, how affectionate, how familiar, was his converſe with them! How great his concern for them! "If ye ſeek me," ſaid he to the guards who came to ſeize him, "then let theſe go their way." It is recorded of him, that, "having loved his own, he loved them unto the end." And, when he was ſhortly to be ſeparated from them, how he ſoothed, comforted, encouraged them! How he ſeemed entirely to forget himſelf and his moſt important concerns, in his attention to them! How tenderly he takes leave of them at the laſt ſupper, and enjoins them the commemoration of him! How he bears them in mind even during the whole courſe of his ſufferings, and in the laſt ſad ſcene of them intereſts himſelf in their welfare! And how he haſtened as it were, on his reſurrection from the dead to ſhew himſelf to them, and to dry up their tears! Was not this friendſhip, was it not the moſt exalted friendſhip? — And the firſt chriſtians, who, actuated by the ſpirit of chriſtianity, were but one heart and one ſoul, who had in a manner all things in common, who were daily of one accord together: did not they compoſe a band of the moſt intimately connected friends, cemented together by the love of God and the love of Jeſus and the love of each other?

No, chriſtianity is by no means unfavourable to real, virtuous friendſhip. It rather inſpires us with all the diſpoſitions, incites us to all the actions, and makes

makes us ready for all the ſacrifices wherein the characteriſtics and the glory of friendſhip conſiſt. Only we ſhould learn how properly to underſtand and appretiate it. And this is the purport of my preſent diſcourſe. In it I will inquire with you into the value of friendſhip, one of the greateſt bleſſings of life. To that end I will firſt ſhew you, how friendſhip ſhould be conſtituted in order to have a great value; then, wherein the value of it conſiſts; and laſtly, how we ſhould behave in regard to it, in order that it may be and procure to us what it is capable of being and procuring to us.

This will enable us to apprehend the truth of Solomon's ſentence which we have taken for our text: "There is a friend that ſticketh cloſer than a brother."

Friendſhip, what a ſacred, venerable name, — and how abuſed and profaned! Now the moſt captivating garb of virtue: now the maſk of vice. Now the indiſſoluble band of generous and noble ſouls: and now the moſt dangerous ſnare of the betrayer of innocence. Here the parent of truth, of frankneſs, of ſincerity; there the diſguiſe of the moſt artful treachery, and the deepeſt cunning. One while a powerful incentive to the faireſt and moſt magnanimous achievements; at another, the ſordid means of proſecuting and attaining the moſt ſelfiſh ends. And all this while, real friendſhip ſtill maintains her ſtation and ſupports her dignity. She preſerves the exalted place ſhe has obtained among the

the virtues and prerogatives of human nature, among the ſources of our felicity. But not everything which bears her name, not everything that borrows her garb, is ſhe herſelf. Let us therefore, for her vindication, rightly diſcriminate between appearance and reality.

When I ſpeak of the value of friendſhip, I mean not to comprehend under that term what the general abuſe of it implies; not every extenſive or more limited connection that may be founded on relationſhip, or on buſineſs, or on conviviality, or on ſocial reſort to entertainments and diverſions, wherein neither intrinſic affection, nor tenderneſs, nor confidence, has part. This is almoſt always nothing more than a ſelfiſh intercourſe of trifling civilities and ſervices, in which the heart has little or no concern; and often a low traffic of mutual profit, which ſubſiſts for ſo long a time as each can find his account in it. No, real friendſhip is pure and generous affection, is the cloſe and complete union of hearts, which is teſtified by an actual participation in all the joys and ſorrows of the other, a mutual and unreſerved confidence, and the moſt diſintereſted officiouſneſs, and ſo connects a man with his friend in regard to ſentiments and ſenſations, that they both of them make but one ſelf.

Neither is ſimilarity or conformity of diſpoſition, of taſte, of propenſities, of views and purſuits, nor the ſtrong attachment thence ariſing, the only, nor even the principal material for raiſing the ſtructure

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of that friendſhip which truly deſerves the name. This ſimilarity, this conformity, this mutual propenſity, may likewiſe ſubſiſt among fools and rogues, and do connect them together for a longer or a ſhorter time. But who will decorate ſuch combinations and connections as theſe with the ſacred name of friendſhip? They are not unfrequently conſpiracies againſt the general welfare, confederacies for ſocial depredation or debauchery. No, it is only the congeniality of mind and manners, grounded on mutually good inclinations and diſpoſitions, on liberal and beneficial deſigns and purſuits, that can ſo draw men together, and unite them ſo intimately to each other, that they ſhall become in a manner one heart and one ſoul; and only in this union can real, exalted friendſhip conſiſt.

In order then that friendſhip ſhould have a great and ſolid worth, it muſt be built on real excellencies of mind and heart; on intelligence and virtue, and on reciprocal eſteem. Both heart and mind are alike neceſſary to it. The good heart alone is not ſufficient to the happineſs of friendſhip. It muſt be guided by a ſound, well-regulated judgment, if we would not frequently occaſion our friend, againſt our will, more diſſatisfaction than comfort, more harm than profit. The light that ſhould enlighten us, and the warmth that ſhould animate us, as friends, muſt not be like the dazzling flaſh of the lightning and the ſcorching heat of the ſummer's ſun,

ſun, but like the light of the day and the mild and cheering breath of the ſpring. — But even the beſt regulated underſtanding and the ſofteſt, tendereſt heart are but weak and frail ſupports of friendſhip without the aid of virtue. The friendſhip which is not founded on virtue, on reciprocal love to all that is beautiful and true and right and proper, cannot be of long ſtability. It is incapable of any generous, magnanimous ſacrifices. The unprincipled man is always in certain points mercenary, ſelfiſh. His views, his preferences, change with his inclinations and paſſions; and as often as theſe come into contact, the voice of friendſhip is heard no more, and its moſt ſacred rights are trampled under foot. Friendſhip between the bad only laſts till one has had his ends of the other in the proſecution of his plan, in the gratification of his ſenſual deſires, or in the oppreſſion and the ruin of a third. Only the virtuous man remains true to his friend even when he can procure him no more profit, and afford him no more aſſiſtance, when he has nothing left to return him for all his civilities and ſervices, but a heart that confeſſes and feels their value. It is virtue alone in fine that can beget in me a ſolid, laſting eſteem for my friend. And what is friendſhip without eſteem? The creature of ſelf-intereſt, of humour, of ſenſuality, of ſelfiſhneſs, or of a blind, mechanical impulſe, that is liable to as many alterations and accidents as the foundation whereon it reſts.

Farther;

Farther: if we would render friendſhip of a real, a great value, it muſt be diſintereſted, generous, and at the ſame time impartial. He that courts my friendſhip, only that he may promote and effect, through my means, certain purpoſes advantageous to him, or in hopes to execute ſome plan of ambition with greater facility; who is only ſo far and ſo long my friend as he finds his account or his pleaſure in it; he profanes the venerable name under which he conceals his baſe and ſelfiſh ſchemes. The true friend looks more to the welfare of his friend than to his own, and feels himſelf much happier when he can give him anything, can help him, can work for him, or ſuffer for him, than when he receives aſſiſtance or benefits from him. He honours and reveres the mind, the heart of his friend, that which makes him a reſpectable and amiable man, and not his ſtation, his wealth, his figure, his influence over others, or any outward advantages. But with all this he is impartial. He overlooks not the greater accompliſhments and merits of others with whom he is leſs cloſely connected; does them ample juſtice; ſhews them, if they deſerve and want it, ſtill more reſpect, ſtill more reverence, ſtill more aſſiſtance, than to the friend of his heart; places them not only in thought, but in deed above him, and furthers their views and their proſperity even to the apparent detriment of his friend, whenever truth and juſtice and the common intereſt require it of him.

Yes, in order that friendſhip ſhould poſſeſs a real, a great value, ſhould be morally good, thirdly, it need not be at variance either with general humanity, or with the benefit of the whole ſociety of which I am a member, or with the particular relations wherein I ſtand to my relatives and family, to my countrymen. No, friendly affection, any more than patriotiſm, need not degenerate into miſanthropy. Never ſhould I ſacrifice to my friend my duty, never the claims of the innocent, nor the public welfare; never ſo excluſively attach myſelf to him, and live for him, as to deprive of my eſteem and affection, my benevolence, or my converſe and kind offices, others who have equal demands upon them. This neither will nor can be required by the friendſhip that is founded on wiſdom and virtue; nay, it would be injured, diſhonoured, diſgraced, by ſo doing. On the contrary, the more pleaſure generous friends ſhall ſacrifice to their duty; the more worthily each maintains his poſt in human and in civil ſociety: ſo much will the tie of friendſhip, that holds them together, be more cloſely drawn.

Laſtly, friendſhip receives its greateſt value from real heart-felt piety. This binds a man to his friend by all that is venerable, holy, comfortable in religion. This renders the great intereſts of man, their common concern. This cleanſes their hearts from all ſelfiſh and mean views and inclinations. This binds them together as fellow-worſhipers of God,

God, as fellow-diſciples of Jeſus, as co-heirs of the future felicity, by the ſtrong ties of faith and hope. This opens to them proſpects in a ſuperior ſtate, where affection will be everlaſting, and where they will inceſſantly purſue the onward path of perfection with united powers. And of what fidelity, of what ſacrifices muſt this not make them capable! What grand exalted ſentiments interchangeably impart to them! What a value muſt it communicate to their friendſhip!

Friendſhip thus framed, and reſting on ſuch a bottom, has a great, an ineſtimable value! Let us ſee what gives it this value, or wherein it conſiſts.

In the firſt place, friendſhip is the moſt intimate and happy conjunction of two ſouls of the ſame generous temper in heart and mind. All things in nature, my pious hearers, as well in the ſpiritual as in the material world, have a continual tendency to unite, to form a cloſer and completer junction. As all the particles of matter reciprocally follow the law of attraction; ſo do ſpirits likewiſe, ſo do human ſouls; ſo all things tend and endeavour to aſſimilate with whatever is or appears to be congenial to them. This is the foundation of love; this the ground of friendſhip. Some have a ſenſual and groſs, others a ſpiritual and nobler conjunction in view. The wiſer and better, the more perfect friends are, the more perfect is their union alſo. If both are of a ſound and vigorouſly reflecting mind, have a capacious, ſuſceptible heart;

if

if both poſſeſs extenſive knowledge, great and elevated diſpoſitions, pure, generous feelings; both great activity in good: they then poſſeſs as it were more points of contact, greater ſimilarity or congeniality, inceſſantly drawing them cloſer, and binding them more indiſſolubly together. They ſee ſo many objects on the ſame ſide, from the ſame point of view, in the ſame combinations; they think and judge of ſo many important matters in the ſame way; they are on ſuch a number of occaſions penetrated by the very ſame ſentiments; employ themſelves ſo frequently and ſo earneſtly about the very ſame things: that each ſees the other in himſelf; has a ſenſe of himſelf in the other, and both ſo think and will and feel and act, as though they were but one. Friendſhip is in fact a reduplicated or multiplied mode of exiſtence, and of effecting and enjoying good. Each exiſts at the ſame time in the other, is operative and effective by him. The good which one does, is done by both; the ſatisfaction that one enjoys, is enjoyed by the other likewiſe; the merit of one is alſo ſet down to the account of the other. Both are animated by the ſame common intereſt, and are bent upon the moſt diverſified activity. And how greatly muſt all this tend to unite like conſtituted ſouls; and how felicitous muſt the ſentiment, the enjoyment of this union be!

True friendſhip is farther the moſt intimate community of all the joys and ſorrows of life; a community,

munity, which as much improves and heightens the one, as it diminiſhes and alleviates the other. No joy is of any great value which remains entirely locked up within my heart, which I cannot impart to a being of my kind, which I cannot enjoy with him; even the moſt exalted, the divineſt of all joys, even the joys of devotion, would ceaſe to be what they are, if I could not enjoy them under a ſenſe of the preſence of God, and of my connection with him; and every even the ſlighteſt afflictions may become oppreſſive, may be intolerable, if I be forced to bear them alone, if none of all that ſurround me will ſuffer with me, or if I am not ſupported under them by a ſenſe of the preſence of the Almighty. But what joy will not be improved and multiplied, what joy will not frequently be augmented into tranſport, by communicating it to the friend of my heart, when I know that he feels it as much as I do myſelf, that he will call my attention to every circumſtance, every conſequence, every effect of it, that can increaſe its value, and that he will, for me and with me, give praiſe for it, from the fullneſs of my heart to God, the giver of joy! And what ſolid and good reflections, what humane and generous ſentiments, what honourable purpoſes, what uſeful employments, what circumſpect proſecution of them, what innocent enjoyment of nature, what growth in knowledge or in virtue, what progreſs towards the common object, but will be a well-ſpring of joy to

friends thus connected together! How greatly muſt all be enhanced in their eyes by the pleaſure they mutually take in it, by the tender, affectionate heart in which they enjoy it! — And their ſorrows, how much more tolerable, how much lighter, muſt they be to them, by not being abandoned to their own violence and fury, by their not remaining locked up in the receſſes of the heart, where they would rankle and the more deeply inflict their ſtings, but are ſhaken forth from the boſom of the one into that of the other; all that tormented and pained him is entruſted to the other without reſerve, not even concealing that which probably no danger, no torture, would have extorted from him! No, neither ſuffers for himſelf alone; neither bears alone the burden that oppreſſes him; each obtains from the other all the comfort, all the counſel, every aſſiſtance he ever has it in his power to give him. And what a ſweet is friendſhip able to infuſe even into the bittereſt ſorrows of human life! What a light it darts into the obſcurities that ſurround it! What vigour and courage it inſpires into the weary and heavy-laden heart! What little circumſtance that has any tendency to cheer and revive it does it not employ! With what a lenient hand it binds up its wounds! What attention, what aſſiduity, what complacency, what indulgence, what ſacrifice, is too troubleſome or too coſtly to this end! And what repays and rejoices them more than when they ſee the ſuffering

ing friend ſuffer leſs, ſuffer more compoſedly, or ſuffer no more; when they can fold him in their arms and preſs him to their heart, reſtored, ſtrengthened, cheered, ſatisfied, again in poſſeſſion of the comforts of life?

True, virtuous friendſhip is thirdly the joint-purſuit of one and the ſame end, an animated endeavour after ever increaſing perfection. And how much muſt their united endeavours be thus facilitated in the glorious attempt! Hand in hand they walk the paths of wiſdom and virtue; with united hearts, with combined forces, they labour at their improvement and happineſs. One quickens and encourages the other to proceed; one incites the other to induſtry and perſeverance, one ſtimulates the other to generous and noble deeds. Each watches over the other, as much as over himſelf; warns him of this danger, reminds him of that duty, ſupports him in each toilſome, each painful enterpriſe, and affectionately recalls him from every indirect and devious way. If one ſtumble or fall, the other raiſes him again; if one grow ſlack and weary on his courſe, he is inſpired with new firmneſs and courage by the voice and the example of the other. Each finds in the other the ſkill, the ability, the dexterity, on a hundred occaſions, which he would never have found in himſelf. Never are they relaxed or retarded by low ſelf-intereſt; but a generous emulation animates them both, and allows neither the one nor the other

to be left behind. They fight in conjunction againſt every diſorderly paſſion that ſtirs within, againſt every attack of envy and deriſion, againſt the baleful influence of prevailing principles and practices, againſt every carking care and every mining ſorrow. And how much muſt this facilitate the conqueſt over all their foes! The more impediments and perils they meet with on the way, the more difficulties they have to encounter: the faſter will the knot that connects them be drawn; the more will their fidelity be exerciſed and ſecured; the more poignant will the mutual ſentiment of friendſhip be; and the more effectual their united efforts to vanquiſh every obſtacle, to ſurmount every difficulty, and to force their way through dangers and calamities to the prize of their high calling, and to ſeize it with concurrent ardour. The ſevereſt penury, the moſt imminent danger, the hardeſt and moſt coſtly ſacrifices, are at once the ſuſtenance and the teſt of their generous friendſhip; and the more a friend can do and riſk and ſacrifice and ſuffer and laborioufly acquire for his friend, the happier is he in the ſentiment of his friendſhip. And of what actions and what enterpriſes are not ſuch friends capable! What degree of virtue, what perfection is unattainable to them!

And what a value, what an ineſtimable value muſt all this confer on friendſhip! What ſublunary happineſs, what outward diſtinction, can be compared

pared to it! None; it is of far greater value than wealth and honour and elevation and power and all the ſplendour of earthly thrones. With it, a man may be deprived of them all, and yet be happy; without it, though he had them all, his heart would never be ſatisfied, nor his thirſt after happineſs be aſſuaged. — Even love muſt yield the palm to friendſhip. Senſual love is conſumed and deſtroyed by enjoyment; and when it is not raiſed upon friendſhip, or does not change into it, it inevitably draws after it ſatiety, diſguſt, averſion. The joys of friendſhip alone neither droop nor decay, and the fruition of them never deadens deſire. If friendſhip be leſs lively and vehement than love, it is therefore the more laſting and pure. Its objects are capable of continued advancement, of inceſſant perfection; in which new beauties, new charms, new bloſſom and fruits, may be diſcovered and enjoyed. It entwines not flowers which bloom to-day and are withered to-morrow; it incorporates not frail materials of duſt and corruption: but its connections are of ſouls, of ſpirits, of immortal beings; beings for ever raiſing themſelves higher above the duſt, for ever approaching nearer to the father of ſpirits, the original fount from whence they ſprung. Love generally dies on this ſide the grave: but friendſhip extends to the regions beyond it, into the better world to come; death only tranſplants it into a new ſcene, where its ſatisfactions will be purer and more

perfect, and it will diſplay itſelf in ſtill nobler efforts and more glorious deeds.

Great as the value of friendſhip is, my pious hearers, however enviable the perſon that enjoys it, yet is it by no means the prerogative of the darling of fortune, a benefit to which only perſons of ſuperior ſtations can make pretenſion. No, friendſhip ſeldom takes up her abode with the rich, ſtill ſeldomer with the high and mighty. She prefers the cottage to the palace, the ſimple manners of the private individual contented with his moderate circumſtances, to the pomp and luxuries of the great; often does ſhe rather chuſe the houſe of ſorrow than the board of feſtivity. Men of the inferior claſſes keep more together, are more ſenſible to their natural equality, thwart and circumvent each other leſs in their views and enterpriſes, are leſs frequently competitors for the ſame pre-eminence, are leſs diſſipated and relaxed, are not ſo apt to loſe ſight of one another amidſt the crowd of extraneous objects: and the ſufferer is in want of a ſympathizer, one into whoſe breaſt he may pour out his ſorrows, whoſe preſence and participation will comfort and ſoothe him, and in whoſe converſation he may forget his diſtreſſes and his pains. Thus friendſhip very frequently is a counterpoiſe to miſery, while the want of it deprives the moſt ſhining circumſtances of the greateſt part of their worth.

So many conſiderations, my pious hearers, which will not allow us to doubt that friendſhip is a highly covetable

covetable bleſſing, that it is one of the choiceſt and beſt endowments of life. Happy he who poſſeſſes this rare diſtinction, who has learnt to prize it as it deſerves, and is ſenſible to the felicity it confers. To him it is a never-failing ſpring of tranquillity and comfort, of ſatisfaction and joy. To him muſt the path of life be far ſmoother, more luminous and pleaſant, than to the wretch who is obliged to purſue it without a guide, without a friend to partake in his obſervations on the pleaſures and proſpects of the journey, and is forced to bear its hardſhips alone, without aſſiſtance or ſupport.

Wouldſt thou, my chriſtian brother, know the happineſs of friendſhip from experience; be cautious in chuſing thy friend. Let wiſdom and virtue direct thy choice. Let not the outward graces, not friendly looks, not a ſmiling countenance, not flattering ſpeeches, not ſtudied civilities, not the firſt impreſſion of complacency, nor every ſimilarity in temper or taſte, beguile thee. Give not thy heart careleſſly away to the firſt that applies for it, or who procures thee preſent pleaſure and ſatisfaction. Place not thy confidence in any thoughtleſs, inconſiderate perſon, any convivial jeſter, any witling, any ſcorner of religion and ſevere morality. Connect not thyſelf with any to whom the bonds of wedloc, the ties of domeſtic and of ſocial life, and the ſtill more awful ties that bind the creature to the creator, are not ſacred. In thy choice, prefer underſtanding and probity to all the glare of riches and the pomp of ſta-

tion, candour and ingenuouſneſs to the moſt poliſhed ſentiments and the moſt amuſing wit; prefer even the harſheſt monitor to the moſt agreeable flatterer. Select for thy friend, the friend of truth, the friend of virtue, the friend of humanity, the friend of God. Rather forego a while longer the happineſs of friendſhip, than run the leaſt riſk of finding wretchedneſs and miſery where thou wert ſeeking the pureſt of human ſatisfactions!

Wouldſt thou farther enjoy the happineſs of friendſhip, and that in a rational and laſting manner; form no extravagant, no romantic conceptions of it. Amuſe not thyſelf with the idea of a friend that no where exiſted, or who muſt have been a uſeleſs or a worthleſs member of ſociety if he did ſo exiſt. Be reaſonable in thy demands on thy friend. Require no perfection more than human, no infallibility of him. Forget not that he is a man, a frail circumſcribed creature, liable like thee to err and to miſtake, and muſt and will be ſo while he is a man. Forget not that he is a father, a huſband, a brother, a citizen, head or member of ſome larger or ſmaller ſociety, and is placed in various connections with a thouſand others. Require not therefore that he ſhould always judge exactly right, give thee conſtantly the beſt advice, have his countenance always equally bright, his behaviour always alike agreeable and pleaſing, his heart equally open and ſenſible, or his intereſt in whatever concerns thee equally active and warm. Demand not of him that he ſhould live

only for thee, converſe with thee alone; ſtill leſs, that he ſhould wound his conſcience for thy ſervice, or ſacrifice to thee the welfare of thoſe who look up to him for protection and ſupport. No, the firmeſt tie of friendſhip is mutual exactitude and integrity in the diſcharge of our duties, as well as mutual forbearance and patience.

Wouldſt thou thirdly render the enjoyment of this happineſs laſting as well as complete; deal circumſpectly with thy friend. The flower of friendſhip muſt be reared and tended with a gentle hand; it has need of nurture and refreſhment, to preſerve it from fading and withering away. Bear then with the harmleſs weakneſſes of thy friend, though probably diſtaſteful to thee. Impoſe on him no burden that he may find it difficult to bear. Give him as freely at leaſt as thou receiveſt of him. Put him not to trials which may imply diſtruſt or awake ſuſpicion. Extort no ſervices or attentions; and force not from him the ſecret with which he is not willing to entruſt thee. Beware of imputing to him each look, each word, each trifling action, which might not probably have been ſufficiently amicable, as a breach of friendſhip, when thou art once become ſure of his heart. Let not the power thou haſt over him degenerate into rigour and ſeverity; or the freedom and familiarity that ſubſiſts between you, into a total neglect of propriety and good manners.

Wouldſt

Wouldſt thou laſtly enjoy the happineſs of friendſhip, and learn to know its full value from experience; be punctual and exact in anſwering to the obligations thou oweſt thy friend. Pay a ſedulous attention to his wants, his views, his connections; let nothing of what concerns him be indifferent to thee, but conſider his intereſts as inſeparable from thy own. Be before-hand with him, as often as thou canſt, in what he may expect or require from thy friendſhip; and let cheerfulneſs and pleaſure accompany and actuate thee in whatever thou doſt in his behalf. Thank him for the civilities and ſervices he accepts from thee, as much as for thoſe thou receiveſt from him. Above all things be ſcrupulouſly exact and faithful in the moſt important and generous demonſtrations of virtuous friendſhip. Exhort, incite, encourage, ſtimulate him to all that is beautiful and good; and be not deterred from it by the fear of forfeiting his eſteem and affection. The friendſhip that will not ſtand this trial, that will not be the firmer for it, is not deſerving of that honourable appellation, deſerves not to be cheriſhed with all poſſible care, as the chiefeſt felicity of life. Indeed thou ſhouldſt not be diſcouraged by the firſt unſucceſsful attempt. Thou ſhouldſt endeavour indeed to procure admiſſion and audience to thy admonitions, thy warnings, thy rebukes, by all that is perſuaſive and prevailing in friendſhip. Indeed thou ſhouldſt repeatedly bear with the diſpleaſure of thy once more equitable friend, and bear it with undiminiſhed

miniſhed affection. But if he will by no means allow himſelf to be admoniſhed, to be cautioned, to be reproved by thee, if he will only endure to be flattered; then — let the bond of attachment between you be cancelled for ever. It was not dictated by wiſdom and virtue, and might eaſily have led thee into a ſnare. — If however thou art juſtified in requiring this of thy friend, then likewiſe on the other hand take the admonitions, the ſuggeſtions, the remonſtrances, even the corrections of thy friend in good part, and with a grateful reſentment. Reſpect and love him the more, that he may have leſs frequent occaſions of giving thee ſuch teſtimonies of his eſteem and affection; and thus run with him towards the mark of human perfection, to which every virtue, every ſpecies of happineſs, and therefore friendſhip tends to conduct us.

SERMON XXXV.

The Value of civil and religious Liberty.

GOD, creator and father of men, far haſt thou elevated us above the beaſts of the field! Of greater perfection and happineſs haſt thou rendered us capable! Thou haſt imparted to us reaſon and liberty. And how great the bleſſings thou haſt granted us by them! What means of becoming ever better, ever wiſer, ever happier! Yes, thou haſt formed us after thy own image, and imprinted on us, thy children, evident marks of our origin from thee. By reaſon and liberty we can have communion with thee, and be continually making nearer approaches to thee, ever gaining a cloſer aſſimilation with thee, the firſt, the moſt perfect being. God, with what privileges haſt thou thus endowed us, the inhabitants of the earth! How happy are we, in being that which thy love commanded us to be! Oh might we but be continually impreſſed with a deeper ſenſe of our dignity and that of our brethren, and be ever thinking and acting more conſiſtently

ſiſtently with it! We are all thy children, all of divine deſcent, all endowed by thee with the ſame privileges, all appointed by thee to perfection and happineſs. And as ſuch we ſhould all eſteem and love each other, all live together as brethren and ſiſters, and none miſlead another from his deſtined path, or degrade him from his dignity, but all be aiding each other to the attainment and maintenance of it. This is thy will, gracious parent of us all; and to do thy will is our honour and our felicity. Oh teach us then with perpetually increaſing fidelity to accompliſh thy will, and to enjoy felicity in completer acceſſions. Worthily to uſe our own liberty, and to reſpect and promote the liberty of our brethren, be that the boaſt, the moſt zealous endeavour of us all! Do thou, merciful father, put a ſtop to the oppreſſion and tyranny of every kind under the burden whereof ſo many of thy children on earth continue to ſigh; break the bonds that deform and degrade the work of thy hands; revive and raiſe the nearly extinguiſhed ſenſe of their dignity in ſuch numbers of mankind; let the ſpirit of liberty be ever farther diffuſed, and its triumphs over thraldom be more conſpicuous and glorious from day to day. Bleſs in that view the meditations on thy word which we are now about to begin. Teach us all duly to eſtimate the value of liberty, and let the ſentiment of it inſpire us with all generous diſpoſitions, with diſpoſitions worthy of the man and the chriſtian. Diſpel by thy holy ſpirit every

every prejudice that tends to weaken theſe good effects of truth; and hear our prayer, through Jeſus Chriſt, by whom thou haſt called us all to liberty. With filial confidence we implore it of thee, as his diſciples, and addreſs thee further in his name: Our father, &c.

I COR. vii. 23.

Be not ye the ſervants of men.

THE ſpirit of chriſtianity is a ſpirit of liberty. Of this its doctrines, its precepts, as well as the character of its founder, and the whole temper it communicates to its true profeſſors, allow us no room to doubt. Where the ſpirit of the Lord is, ſays the apoſtle, there is liberty. Chriſtianity promotes liberty of each kind, civil as well as religious, among mankind. — If it anywhere is not ſo apparently favourable to it; if anywhere it ſeems to require of its followers an unlimited and implicit obedience towards magiſtrates and governors; this was extremely neceſſary in the primitive times for the confirmation and extenſion of it. The chriſtian doctrine muſt have been clear of everything that might excite ſuſpicion of worldly aims, or dread of civil commotion. It muſt firſt diſſeminate more inſtruction and morality among mankind, before it was expedient

expedient to give them any direct incitement and encouragement to the vindication of their rights. A too lively ſenſe of liberty in men, who are in general but little cultivated and have no firm principles, is oftentimes more prejudicial than uſeful. But the ſpirit of chriſtianity, the whole ſtate of mind and manners it inculcates, has indiſputably the advancement of both kinds of liberty in view. No doctrine whatever cauſes man to apprehend more forcibly his natural equality with all others; none more expreſsly preaches to him humanity and brotherly love, univerſal kindneſs and beneficence and generoſity; none inſpires him with a livelier ſenſe of his dignity as man; none is more fertile in great, generous, elevated thoughts and emotions of mind and heart; none teaches man to conſider death with greater compoſure, and to meet it with more firmneſs; none makes him readier to die for his brethren and for the public good, as Jeſus died for mankind: and who ſees not that no diſpoſitions can be more manifeſtly at variance with ſlavery and bondage, and none more favourable to freedom than theſe? Oh were they but more general among chriſtians, and that even rulers and governors would but learn to think in a more chriſtian manner! How much advantage would accrue to the cauſe of freedom, and conſequently of human happineſs! Far be it from me, my pious hearers, to preach ſedition in the ſtate, or diſunion and ſchiſm in the church! But to preach and to promote liberty,

berty, and to render the greater or the ſmaller proportion of it you enjoy the dearer to you, is a duty of univerſal obligation, a chriſtian duty! And to contribute ſomething to the diſcharge of this duty is the ſcope of my preſent diſcourſe. In it I ſhall inquire into the value of liberty, civil and religious, and its influence on human happineſs, and therein lay before you the importance of the apoſtolical admonition in our text: "Be not ye the ſervants of men." In this deſign, I ſhall firſt make a few obſervations for aſcertaining the true notion of liberty and its real value; then examine into the peculiar value of the two kinds; and laſtly ſubjoin ſome ſuggeſtions in regard of our behaviour towards it.

Civil liberty is there in its greateſt perfection where we are only ſubject to the laws, and chuſe our own repreſentatives in enacting thoſe laws. In other conſtitutions of government there exiſts always ſo much the greater or leſs degree of freedom as the laws more or leſs bear ſway, and as even the arbitrary will and power of the ruler is circumſcribed by them. So likewiſe religious liberty is there in its greateſt perfection where we are ſubject in religious matters, to no other laws than the dictates of reaſon and conſcience, and may follow their impulſes and injunctions without moleſtation. And likewiſe here if limitations exiſt, then does ſo much more or leſs liberty of this kind obtain as ſuch limitations are more extenſive or confined, as they relate to eſſential or uneſſential points.

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That we may rightly eſtimate the value of this liberty, it is neceſſary to make ſeveral remarks, and accurately to diſtinguiſh it from what is often called, but is not, liberty.

Liberty in the firſt place is not licentiouſneſs, not anarchy. To be free, does not imply, to act without principles, without views, from abſolute ſelf-will; not to break through and deſpiſe all reſtraints; not to account every law a violent impoſition and burden, and to reject it as ſoon as we think or feel it in the leaſt degree inconvenient to us; not to ſet aſide all that is fit, and to get over all that is decent; not to exiſt and live barely for oneſelf, without regard to others. No, laws, accurately defined, inviolable, obligatory on all ſtates and conditions of men, on princes and magiſtrates as well as on ſubjects, are the firſt and firmeſt foundation of liberty. Wouldſt thou enjoy a liberty controuled by no law, limited by no authority, in the full power of doing merely what thou art pleaſed to do: get thee gone from the ſociety of men; return to the woods, to the pretended ſtate of nature; herd among the animals thy relations, the beaſts of the field; or lead the life of a hermit, diveſt thyſelf of all the privileges, and renounce all the comforts of ſociety. For, where men would live together, and live ſecurely and happily together: there muſt be law, there muſt law bear ſway, there muſt every one ſacrifice a part of his natural liberty to the peaceful poſſeſſion of what he retains. No, the greater the

freedom of the individual; the more ſacred ſhould all the laws of the ſtate, the firſt as well as the laſt, be to him. The more freely the worſhiper of God may think, the leſs he is tied to forms and confeſſions; ſo much the ſtricter and more conſcientiouſly ſhould he conform to the eternal and unchangeable laws of reaſon, and be guided by the precepts of a revelation which he confeſſes to be divine.

Farther. The love of liberty is not a querulous diſpoſition, is not a ſpirit of oppoſition to all laws and ordinances, to all received opinions and doctrines, a repugnance to all inſtitutions, eſtabliſhments, and uſages, introduced into civil and religious life. No, the more ſenſible a perſon is to the value of his own liberty; the leſs will he be diſpoſed authoritatively to ſet bounds to the liberty of others. The more unmoleſtedly he may follow the dictates of his own conſcience: the more does he reſpect the conſcience, even the erroneous conſcience, of his brother. The leſs he is tied down to opinions and formularies of doctrine himſelf, and the more ſenſibly he is hurt when his faith and his perſuaſions are made the objects of deriſion; ſo much the more indulgent is he to the opinions and perſuaſions of others, and the leſs will he allow himſelf to controvert or to correct them otherwiſe than by argument, and in the ſpirit of humility and meekneſs. The unſeaſonable reprover, the biting ſcoffer of every kind, is not ſolicitous for the cauſe of liberty, but for his own;

own; he is not actuated by the love of liberty, but by pride and the luſt of dominion.

Laſtly, it is with liberty, as with all the other bleſſings of life; it is only of great value to them who know how to uſe it properly. Often is it a fertile ſource of diſturbances, diviſions, ſchiſms, confuſion to the citizen as well as to the worſhiper, in the church no leſs than in the ſtate. Often is it made ſubſervient to the paſſions, to pride, to vanity, to ſelf-intereſt, to pertinacity, to ambition; ſometimes it degenerates into arrogance, into licentiouſneſs, into fury: and then it can certainly produce nothing but miſery. In the hands of weakneſs and vice, everything becomes dangerous, even wiſdom itſelf. But this detracts nothing from the value of liberty any more than of wiſdom.

No, great, ineſtimably great, is the value of it! The happineſs it procures or promotes, far outweighs the accidental evils that attend it. The ſubſequent conſiderations, intended to ſet its value in a proper light, cannot fail to convince us of this truth.

Liberty is firſt the natural ſtate and the warmeſt wiſh of man. Everything that lives and thinks is panting and ſtriving for freedom. The beaſt bears not the trammel without violence, and ſtruggles under the yoke we lay upon his neck; and the more ſelf-conſciouſneſs, the more reflection man poſſeſſes above the brute, the more oppreſſive and intolerable muſt it be to him to bear ſimilar or heavi-

er ſhackles, and to ſigh under a ſimilar or a more galling yoke. No, man is not born for ſlavery, he is not deſigned for bondage. This is evident from his native diſpoſitions, his capacities, his faculties, and the conſciouſneſs he has of them all, and the various, optional, deliberate uſes to which he can apply them. Every man has theſe prediſpoſitions, theſe capacities, theſe faculties, and this conſciouſneſs, in common with all other men. No man is eſſentially diſtinguiſhed from another. No one belongs to a higher ſpecies or order of beings. All are equal with each other, as men; all are brothers and ſiſters in the ſtricteſt ſenſe of the words. To determine ourſelves, to act from our convictions, is what elevates man above the beaſts of the field, and makes us what we are. He therefore who deſpoils him of this liberty, or arbitrarily circumſcribes it, degrades and debaſes humanity, and is guilty of treaſon againſt the human race. He uſurps a pre-eminence over his brethren, over creatures of his kind and nature, which only beings of a ſuperior order to man can claim, like that which man aſſerts over the beaſts of the field. This natural equality of men, and the rights that are grounded on it, are undeniable and unalienable. The uneſſential but accidental difference of weak and ſtrong, of greater or leſs mental and bodily powers of men, may and ſhould create mutual dependence, various connections and relations, but not tyranny and ſlavery. Even the feebleſt, the moſt limited man, is ſtill a

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man, who indeed may want a guide, a counſellor, an overſeer and provider, but not a tyrannical maſter. Civil as well as religious ſociety ſhould be that in the large, which domeſtic ſociety is in the little. In one, as in the other, there ſhould be father and children, teacher and ſcholar, leader and follower, head and members, lawgiver and ſubjects; but neither there nor here ſhould tyranny and bondage exiſt. This is the voice of nature, ſpeaking aloud to all intelligent beings, and her beheſts and decrees ſhould, to every one who has any principle of ſelf-conſciouſneſs remaining, be ſacred and inviolable.

Liberty, civil and religious liberty, brings ſecondly the mental powers of man into greater play, ſets them in greater and more diverſified action, and thus furthers their perfection. The more diverſified and important the affairs which occupy the human mind, and whereon it is free to reaſon, to judge, and to diſcourſe; the more incitement has it from within and from without, to produce, to uſe, to exert its powers, and to ſtrengthen them by theſe uſes and exertions. And what can be more important to a man than the concerns of the ſtate to which he belongs, on one hand, and the concerns of the religion he profeſſes, on the other? To whom can his own perſonal happineſs, and to whom can the means and methods by which it is advanced or retarded, be indifferent? And who can reflect and diſcourſe on theſe ſubjects, if he be allowed to do ſo

at all, without great attention and participation, without a manifold application and exercise of his mental powers? He indeed who is not allowed to think and to know more of matters of state or religion, than it is held expedient to let him think and know; he who is obliged to judge of what is true and right and proper by prescriptions and established formularies; he has soon excogitated the matter; he will shortly become indifferent both to the state and to religion; will let others think and determine for him; will decline all research after truth; will suppress every doubt; and his mind soon sinks, in regard to his most important concerns, into a careless slumber, into absolute inaction. Only where freedom reigns, only there reigns the true life of the mind. There all its native dispositions are brought forth, all its capacities unfolded and applied. There it takes a cordial interest in whatever happens, in all that relates to mankind. There it shrinks from no obstacle, is deterred by no difficulty that it meets with in its reflections and scrutinies, by no chimera of superstition, by no dread of man. There is unimpeded communication, unembarrassed circulation of every truth, of every doubt, of every thought, that once excites attention; and each ray of light is reflected on a hundred benighted minds, each spark of celestial fire is communicated to a hundred generous hearts; one mind assists another in its investigations and efforts. And if mental

perfection

perfection be thus promoted among mankind, who can refuſe to acknowledge the value of that liberty, by which it is effected?

Liberty, civil as well as religious liberty, is thirdly the only effectual preſervative againſt ſervility, with all its baleful and degrading conſequences. Where the former, where civil liberty is wanting, there ſtation and rank ſupply the place of merit, gold and ſilver, greatneſs and power, dignities and titles avail much more than the intrinſic qualities of the man whom they decorate or inveſt; there abſolute command uſurps the place of reaſon, arbitrary puniſhments and largeſſes that of all inward motive and proper determination to act in this manner or in that; there the lowly crouch before the lofty, the poor in the preſence of the rich, and the ſubject ſtands terrified at his prince; there one implicitly approves what is ſaid and admires what is done by the other; there each thinks and lives far more in the opinion and the judgment of others, than in himſelf and from his own feeling; there the art of flattering, the art of diſſembling, the art of miſrepreſenting, are the moſt important arts of life; there no one undertakes or performs more for the national benefit than he is abſolutely obliged to do; there every one ſeeks to evade the laws, to neglect his duty, to ſhrink from his obligations with impunity, and to ſeize on the rewards of merit without deſert; there men who are in all reſpects equal, there brethren live together as if they were perfectly alienated

and eſtranged from each other, as if they were creatures of a quite different kind. And how can this fail of ſtifling in the very bud every ſpecies of generous ſentiment and action; how effectually muſt it eradicate all philanthropy and patriotiſm! — Where the other, where religious liberty is wanting, there religion appears generally under a gloomy and a horrid aſpect; there is ſhe by no means the familiar friend of man, his beſt comforter, but a woeful diſturber of his peace, an auſtere and haughty deſpot ever threatening and dictating, and demanding an implicit credulity, an implicit obedience; there muſt her confeſſors be conſtantly doing violence to themſelves, ſuppreſſing their natural feelings, and contradicting and counteracting the plaineſt declarations of their reaſon; there muſt they be filled more with a ſlaviſh dread of God and of the future world, than with filial love towards their heavenly father, and cheered by delightful proſpects in a better life; there muſt they teſtify to men, as weak and as frail as themſelves, the reverence and ſubmiſſion which are only due to God and truth; there will a man be often in thraldom to the moſt ſhameful ſuperſtition, and muſt groan under all the terrors and humiliations of it. And how can religion appear venerable and amiable to him? How can it be and afford to him what it is appointed to be and to afford to mankind? — No, there alone where civil liberty prevails, a man is of that conſequence a man ſhould be; there underſtanding and honeſty

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paſs current for more than all outward diſtinctions; there mankind live together as ſo many brothers and ſiſters; there every one ſhews himſelf as what he is, and is accordingly eſteemed; there truth and openneſs in looks and geſtures, in words and deeds, may venture to appear; there by a ſecret impulſe the laws are honoured and obſerved; there manly, generous, patriotic ſentiments prevail; there each man underſtands and promotes, according to his means, the public welfare, and with pleaſure offers up to it, his perſonal gratifications and intereſts. — There alone, where religious liberty prevails, will religion be truly important to the underſtanding and the heart of man; there it employs them both; there it coincides with his whole ſyſtem of thought and ſentiment; there ſhe gives light and animation to them both; there ſhe may become the conſtant companion and guide of mankind, becauſe ſhe has reaſon and liberty for her handmaids; there ſhe caſts around neither fears nor terrors, but imparts courage and confidence to her votaries; there ſhe exalts the mind of man, and expands and aſſuages his heart; there ſhe condeſcends to his apprehenſion, is in no oppoſition to the actual world, to his natural feelings and experiences, requiring nothing of him which he is unable to concede, and interdicting him nothing that is harmleſs and proper; there it ennobles all things in his eyes, inſpires him with confident filial diſpoſitions towards God, and makes every duty a pleaſure to him. And how diſtant,

tant, my dear friends, how diſtant is all this from that ſervility which is the reſult of oppreſſion and bondage! And what a value muſt it confer upon liberty!

For the ſame reaſon liberty is fourthly propitious to every ſpecies of virtue. A ſlave as ſuch cannot be virtuous. He can obey; but he obeys, not from inclination, but from compulſion. He can abſtain from evil and do good; but he has neither an inward abhorrence of the one, nor a preponderant love for the other. He abſtains from the wrong and does the right, only inſomuch as he is obliged to abſtain and compelled to do. Thus does the man who is not actuated by liberty obſerve the laws of the ſtate, thus does he obſerve the precepts of religion. Both are oppreſſive, as a heavy burden forced upon him, which he would fain ſhake off if it could be done without hazard. He accordingly diſcharges himſelf of it as often as he is unobſerved, and can indulge the hope of eſcaping correction. — No, liberty is the vital principle, the ſoul of all real virtue, of all great attempts and truly glorious actions. When I may myſelf examine and determine what I ought to do or neglect, what I ſhould think and believe, what I am authorized to hope and what I ought to fear; when I may convince myſelf by rational and free diſquiſition, of the veracity of my belief, of the juſtice and reaſonableneſs of my duties, of the foundations of my hope or my fear, and afterwards may follow my perceptions and convictions:

tions: then it is my own heart that impels me; then I adhere firmly to that which I acknowledge to be true; then I do that which I ought to do, willingly and readily, according to my beſt abilities; then actual averſion to evil ariſes in my ſoul; and real, cordial love for whatever is beautiful and right and proper; then I am deterred neither by obſtacles nor difficulties from hearkening to conſcience, from the diſcharge of my duty; then I do, not barely that which I am obliged to do, but all that I am able to perform; then I think and act in ſecret, juſt as in the ſight of the world; then harmony ſubſiſts in all that I think and will and do; then I run conſtantly after purer and higher perfection; and then alone I act virtuouſly and am truly virtuous. And where has virtue ſhone in greater luſtre, where has ſhe undertaken and achieved more glorious exploits, where has her ſenſe and ſpirit more generally prevailed, where has ſhe left fairer monuments of diſintereſtedneſs, of generoſity, of fortitude, of painful and magnanimous ſacrifices, of moſt extraordinary vigour and greatneſs of mind, than in places where ſhe has enjoyed the benign influence of liberty, and been totally animated by its energy?

Liberty, civil as well as religious liberty, is fifthly the parent, the nurſe of arts, of ſciences, of every kind of public and private proſperity. He that would attain to any conſiderable height of proficiency in ſome liberal art, or carry it to a certain degree of perfection, ſhould poſſeſs a liberal and generous

nerous mind; his underſtanding ſhould not be fettered by prejudice or worldly conſiderations, his genius not cramped, nor repreſſed in its arduous flights by any dread of man. He ſhould have full ſcope for his reflections, for his feelings, his fancy; ſhould go in queſt of truth, of beauty and perfection, on all ſides, with unbounded liberty; their images, their preſence alone ſhould inſpire him with reſpect, their laws alone be ſacred to him. — With the moſt important, the moſt exalted of all ſciences, with the ſcience of religion, the caſe is preciſely the ſame. All violence, conſtraint and coercion are averſe to her ſpirit. She is the daughter of heaven, and allows of no controul from men. The friend of liberty is her friend. To him ſhe confides her ſecrets; to him ſhe appears in her native, her celeſtial form. The ſlave only perceives her in a tawdry diſguiſe, tricked out in a garb of human texture, under which her true figure is concealed. There alone where reflection on religious matters is not confined by eſtabliſhed rules, not rivetted to human confeſſions of faith; there alone where the right of free inquiry is retained by her confeſſors: there alone can the knowledge of religion be conſtantly becoming plainer, more correct and complete; there alone can it be purified from human commixtures, ſecured againſt human abuſes, and become that univerſal diſpenſer of light and life it was ordained to be. — And, as religion, as arts and ſciences flouriſh under the foſtering hand of liberty, ſo

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alſo every ſpecies of public and private proſperity is cheriſhed by the ſame genial influence. She communicates life and activity to all. She ſtrengthens the weak, ſhe quickens the ſlothful, ſhe encourages and requites the active and induſtrious, facilitates and promotes the effects of all public-ſpirited undertakings, the ſucceſs of all kinds of manufactures and commerce, and ſhews us fertile and ſmiling fields, and diligent and cheerful employment, where before was the gloomy wilderneſs, the uninhabited deſert.

Yet more. Only from the ſenſe and enjoyment of liberty, of civil as well as religious liberty, can a man aſſert his real dignity as beſeems the man and the chriſtian. What more diſtinguiſhes the man from the brute? What is his boaſted pre-eminence, if it be not liberty? That he needs not follow blind irreſiſtible inſtincts; that he is not obliged merely to move by mechanical laws; that he can conſider, reflect, chuſe; that he can determine himſelf and do that which he accounts the beſt according to his perceptions: is not this the true dignity of man? And how can the ſlave aſſert and enjoy it; the ſlave who is loaded with ponderous and oppreſſive chains, who muſt implicitly follow the will of another, who feels himſelf thwarted in thought and manacled in action, by arbitrary preſcriptions and controul? — How differently is the dignity of the man, the chriſtian aſſerted by him who knows the happineſs of liberty! The freer a man is as the member of a commu-

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nity, the ſtronger, the greater, the weightier, is the conſciouſneſs of himſelf. Whatever he thinks, ſpeaks and does, as ſuch, acquires thereby a certain value. He is no indifferent or uſeleſs member of the ſtate; he takes an intereſt in all that happens to it; has an influence, or ſuppoſes he has an influence, on it all; feels the proſperity of the whole ſociety as if it were his own, and the damages it ſuſtains as a detriment to himſelf; he works and toils for poſterity as well as for his contemporaries, and hopes, in his deſcendants, or by his public-ſpirited inſtitutions and enterpriſes, to be the benefactor of his brethren long after his death. And how great muſt he thus feel himſelf to be! What a dignity muſt this confer upon all his purſuits and actions! — And thus likewiſe it is with religious liberty. The freer a man is as a worſhiper of God, as a chriſtian, the more is he alive to the privilege of being ſo, the more worthily will he ſupport it. He alone worſhips God in ſpirit and in truth, with underſtanding and ſentiment. He alone is impelled by his real wants to all the duties of religion and worſhip, to every act of piety, every exercife of devotion. He alone completely feels the happineſs and the honour of the relations in which he ſtands to the Creator as his creature. To him alone is it the true aliment and recreation of his ſpirit, when he is buſied in ſilent meditations on religion, when, with a tranquil mind, with a mind unfettered by prejudice and the dread of man, he can proceed

farther and farther in inveſtigating and applying the moſt important truths, when he can elevate himſelf with joy and reverence to the firſt and moſt perfect being, and can entirely repoſe in his idea of him and in the ſentiment of his love. — The more freely man in general thinks and acts, the more inward and cheerful conſciouſneſs has he of the capacities and powers of his nature, of his grand deſtination, of his affinity with beings of a ſuperior order and with the deity himſelf, of all that he at preſent is and ſhall hereafter be and become. And ſhould not the liberty that exalts him thus, which awakens and maintains this conſciouſneſs in him, be of infinite value in his eyes?

Liberty is laſtly the trueſt, the moſt comfortable enjoyment of life. No ſlave can ever be thoroughly joyful in his life; too often it is a burden to him; too often does he voluntarily caſt it off, as an inſupportable load; his faculties, his goods, his time, his very life is not his own; the poſſeſſion, the uſe, the continuance of them depend upon the caprice of his maſter. What he yeſterday earned by the ſweat of his brow, is raviſhed from him to-day; and the plans and deſigns he is buſied with to-day will be defeated and fruſtrated to-morrow. He is and has and does and enjoys only what his owner will have him to be and to have and to do and to enjoy. What great value then can thoſe things poſſeſs to him! How dull and inſipid, how embittered to him muſt often the enjoyment

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of them be! — No, none but the free man can peaceably enjoy and thoroughly reliſh their ſweets. If he have civil liberty; then as a man and a member of the community he has neither violence nor oppreſſion to fear, while he is obedient to the laws. What he is and has, that he is and has, not for the ſtranger, but for himſelf and his. What he has invented, wrought, or earned, is his, of it he reaps the fruits. He can purſue any lawful employment without moleſtation, proſecute any innoxious deſign at pleaſure, and even when he is working for his deſcendants, for futurity, has even then a far greater aſſurance that his labours will not be in vain, that he ſhall not fail of his ultimate object. He is neither forced to ſwell the treaſures of the tyrant, nor to ſatiate the rapacity of his ſervants, nor to conſume his faculties and his life in vile bond-ſervice. He can ſafely and quietly dwell in his hut, follow his employment in the calm of obſcurity, enjoy at his eaſe the comforts of domeſtic and ſocial life, and is not tormented with fears of being arreſted unawares by ſome arbitrary order of government, or of being deſpoiled, by the machinations of any ſecret and powerful adverſary, of his goods, of his honour, of his children, or the natural uſe of his freedom. — Does he enjoy liberty of religion and conſcience; then the religion he profeſſes is actually his own religion, and the conſcience he reveres is likewiſe his own. The conſiderations and reaſons that have led and determined him,

him, are his own conſiderations and reaſons. His faith is the effect of his reflections, the reſult of his conviction. He needs not be alarmed at every error, at every doubt, at every novel idea, at every deviation from the beaten track, at every unuſual elucidation ſo terrifying to the ſervile formaliſt. He is neither affrighted at the ghaſtly ſpectre of error, nor the ſuperior brightneſs of particular truths. He has principles to which he adheres, by which he tries all things, which even then conſole and ſafely guide him when they leave him undetermined and doubtful. Whatever he knows of religious matters, he knows thoroughly; whatever he believes, he believes firmly; whatever he hopes, he hopes with confidence; whatever he thinks and does in all theſe reſpects, he thinks and does with earneſtneſs and ſatisfaction. And thus does the happy man, who has been nurſed in the lap of liberty, who enjoys his proper freedom as a man and as a chriſtian, paſs his life in cheerfulneſs and comfort, uſes and enjoys the goods and advantages of it with confidence and courage; and in that enjoyment has no fear of being diſturbed by the arbitrary orders of a ſpiritual or temporal ſuperior.

And now, my dear friends, judge for yourſelves, whether liberty, whether civil and religious liberty, be not of great value, ſince it is the natural ſtate of man, and the warmeſt wiſh of his heart; ſince it ſo much promotes the activity and perfection of his mental faculties; ſince it ſecures him from all

ſervility; ſince it is ſo favourable to virtue; ſince it is the parent of arts, of ſciences, of public and private proſperity; ſince it is the firmeſt ſupport of the dignity of the man and of the chriſtian, and the moſt delicious enjoyment of life. Yes, liberty is an ineſtimable bleſſing; a poſſeſſion without which almoſt all others would loſe the greateſt part of their worth, and by which they are all of them multiplied and enhanced.

But the knowledge, the conviction of the value of liberty, ſhould not lie dormant in our breaſts; it ſhould have an influence on our conduct.

If ye recognize and feel the value of liberty, my pious hearers, patronize and protect it wherever it ſubſiſts; enjoy your own happineſs, but ſeek not to deſtroy or circumſcribe the enjoyment of it in others. He that by any means undermines or contracts the bounds of liberty; he that forges fetters for his brethren, or brings them under a yoke, or prevents them from breaking and caſting it off; is an enemy of mankind, a traitor to the human race, an ignominious ſlave, who would fain reduce and debaſe all men to the ſame ſervile diſpoſitions with himſelf. No, the liberty of our brother ſhould be juſt as ſacred to us as his property, as his honour, as his life, as his ſum of happineſs; ſince, that once gone, all the others loſe frequently the whole of their value. Of all criminals, the tyrant is the moſt atrocious, the petty tyrant as well as the great, the ſervant of the

prince as well as the prince himſelf; and no crime muſt draw after it more humiliation and ſhame and torment in the future world than this, as none is more manifeſtly in direct oppoſition to the will of God, to all his views and commands, to the ſpirit of true religion and chriſtianity, to the whole of human happineſs than this.

This however, is not enough. If you confeſs the value of liberty, then alſo promote and advance it. Do ſo eſpecially, you who ſhine in poliſhed circles, who fill the higher ſtations, you that are in the claſſes of the learned, who are teachers and guides of the people, who as fine writers influence the taſte and the principles of the times, or are diſtinguiſhed above others by ſuperior talents, and more generous ſentiments. It is an indiſpenſable duty incumbent on you to ſupport and advance the cauſe of liberty. You are the curators of the nation, the guardians of its conſtitution, the interpreters of its laws, the arbitrators between the government and the ſubject; and ſad is your caſe if you do not employ the deference and reſpect and authority you poſſeſs, to the ends for which the Father of mankind, the Judge of the world, has inveſted you with them! Maintain then and protect the unalienable rights of mankind; defend and ſupport the equally ſacred rights of conſcience. Neither degrade yourſelves by a blind and ſlaviſh obedience, nor by a ſuperſtitious ſubmiſſion, to the ordinances and traditions of men. Beware of be-

coming, either in one reſpect or the other, the ſervants of men. In both reſpects try all things, and cleave to that which, according to the ſoundeſt dictates of your judgment, is the beſt. Shew reſpect to the great and mighty of the earth; but flatter them not; crouch not in their preſence, as if they were creatures of a ſuperior order. Judge of their actions with diſcretion; but judge of them by the ſelf-ſame laws by which you pronounce upon the actions of other men; and neither applaud nor approve of anything merely becauſe it has been ſaid or done by a man that is ſurrounded by particular pomp. Reverence the religion of the realm, and its teachers, and its rites. But decline not to examine the doctrines of that religion, to diſcuſs the deciſions of thoſe teachers, and to judge of the propriety or impropriety of thoſe rites. Allow full ſcope to the progreſs of human knowledge; diſcountenance no decent inveſtigation of received maxims and doctrines, be the conſequence what it may. Truth can at length be no loſer by it; and one perſpicuous thought, thoroughly underſtood and deeply felt, is of more value, and does more good, than ten others, heard of one man and repeated to another, and underſtood of neither from principle and conviction.

Laſtly, the more liberty ye enjoy, my pious hearers, the more let it operate that good in you which it is able and ought to produce. If you may worſhip God after your own principles, then worſhip

worſhip him with the greater cheerfulneſs and fervour; adore him ſo much the more in ſpirit and in truth, with underſtanding and ſentiment. Are you allowed to think and to judge for yourſelves in religious matters; reflect ſo much the more on thoſe important concerns; let it be ſo much the more your moſt delightful employment to explore and to know them; endeavour the more to aſſure yourſelf of your faith by reaſon and argument. Woe to him whom freedom to think, whom liberty of religion and conſcience, renders indifferent to religion and truth, or inattentive to the voice of conſcience! Inſtead of being free, and of being better and happier by liberty, he only barters to his loſs one ſlavery for another; and though he be not oppreſſed by man, yet is he in bondage to his own luſts and paſſions. No, he who would not render himſelf unworthy of the privilege of ſeeing with his own eyes, and of purſuing his object in the way he has choſen for himſelf, ſhould uſe his eyes with ſo much the more aſſiduity, and walk his onward courſe with the greater circumſpection. — Do you enjoy civil liberty; then obſerve the laws of the ſtate and of the ſociety to which you belong, with the readier and ſtricter obedience; for the maintenance and obſervance of the laws is the baſis of all liberty. Promote the welfare of that ſtate, of that ſociety with ſo much the more zeal, as it is the more intimately connected with your own, as you have and may have ſo much the more in-

fluence on its proſperity, as you find and enjoy in it ſo much the more protection and peace, ſecurity and happineſs. Think and act in all reſpects with the greater liberality and public ſpirit, the farther you are exalted above the ſtate of ſlavery. — Contend all of you, in the laſt place, my dear friends, for that greater, that ſtill more eſſential liberty of the wiſe man and the chriſtian, who governs himſelf, who controuls his appetites and paſſions, ſeeks his happineſs not ſo much in externals as in inward perfection, is never unmindful of his dignity, ſupports it in every condition, uninterruptedly follows the dictates of his reaſon and his conſcience, and wills nothing but what God wills, and does nothing but what is in conformity to the will of God. Yes, this is the liberty which will compenſate the want of any other, and will be conſtantly bringing us nearer to the mark of our high vocation.

O liberty, fair child of truth, neceſſary reſult of divine influence, fruitful parent of internal peace! Thou raiſeſt the mind above the tyranny of abject paſſion; not diſſolved in the blandiſhments of better fortune, not terrified with the frowns of worſe; capable of enjoying the bleſſings of one, incapable of ſuffering the injuries of the other! Fixed on the immoveable foundation of real virtue; unalterable by any variety of accidental circumſtance; ſtranger to all ſelfiſh views; thou extendeſt thy generous affection through all the charities of each relation; enlarging thy own happineſs in the unbounded

bounded wiſh for that of others! By thee the good man, patriarch, prophet, apoſtle, martyr, is taught to triumph over poverty, over calumny, over tortures and death! Thou leadeſt him by the hand in humble confidence through the perplexities of this earthly labyrinth! Safe under thy conduct, he knows no fear but infamy, and his ruling hope is immortality!

SERMON XXXVI.

The Value of Learning.

GOD, from thee proceed intelligence and wiſdom; from thee proceed all the knowledge and ſciences which lead and direct mankind; which bleſs and rejoice them in numberleſs ways. From thee, who dwelleſt in inacceſſible light, and art thyſelf pure light, pure truth and perfection, from thee flow light and truth and happineſs on us and on all intelligent beings! Thou haſt planted in us all an ever active curioſity, an ardent thirſt for the knowledge of truth; given us capacities and powers for ſeeking and inveſtigating it; opened to us various ſources for aſſuaging our thirſt. And how many benefits, how many refreſhments, how many ſatisfactions, how many felicities have thy children of mankind, already drawn from theſe ſources; and how much bleſſing and delight do they not daily and hourly draw from them! Thanks and praiſe be to thee, author of all beings, father of all ſpirits, for having made us rational, intelligent creatures,

creatures, capable of knowledge and wiſdom, and afforded us ſo many motives and means for conſtantly more unfolding theſe our nobleſt capacities, and for proceeding ever farther in knowledge and wiſdom! Still indeed in various reſpects veiled and oppreſſed by night and darkneſs; ſtill often deceived by ſenſuality and error; ſtill only liſping children, ſtill only feeble novices in the ſchool of wiſdom; yet capable of an inceſſant progreſs, of an always increaſing perfection! And what does not this allow us to hope! What proſpects does it not open to us in all future times and eternities! Yes, the truth that comes from thee and leads to thee, ſhould be ever dearer and more dear to us, its inveſtigation and its knowledge be increaſingly more important; and nothing ſhould render us diſpirited and ſlothful in our purſuits after higher attainments in wiſdom and perfection! And the more perfect here our knowledge is, the leſs we here can quench our thirſt for truth and our longing after thee, its eternal ſource; the more ought we to rejoice in the ſun of righteouſneſs that has riſen to us and poured its radiance on the path of immortality to which thou haſt raiſed us through Jeſus Chriſt; the more zealouſly ought we to ſtrive, by the beſt, the moſt faithful uſe of the light thou haſt now cauſed to ſhine upon us, to render ourſelves capable and worthy of a far greater and brighter light from that full tide of glory, that one unclouded blaze which overflows thy courts,

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in the future world to explore the ſecrets of thy eternal empire. Teach us thyſelf, o gracious God, ever to appretiate more juſtly the advantages thou haſt at preſent in this reſpect vouchſafed us, ever to prize them higher, and to apply them more and more to the greateſt poſſible promotion of human happineſs. Bleſs to this end the conſiderations we purpoſe now to begin upon this ſubject, and let our prayer be well-pleaſing in thy ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt, our lord, in whoſe bleſſed name and words we ſum up all our petitions, ſaying: Our father, &c.

I KINGS, x. 8.

Happy are thy men, happy are theſe thy ſervants, which ſtand continually before thee, and that hear thy wiſdom.

LEARNING, like the other privileges and endowments of mankind, is ſeldom judged of with ſtrict propriety, is ſeldom taken for what it actually is. It has its panegyriſts, who exaggerate its value, as well as its ignorant or haughty deſpiſers, who refuſe it the importance it deſerves. Conſidered in its univerſal extent, to ſpeak impartially, it has occaſioned ſo much good and ſo much harm; has ſo frequently appeared under the moſt venerable aſpect, and ſo frequently in the moſt ridiculous figure; and conſiſts in fact of ſuch a curious parcelled medley of important and unimportant matters:

matters: that, in regard to the various ſides it has, and the various effects it produces, as well as to the various perſons that profeſs it, it muſt neceſſarily experience various and oppoſite opinions, one while deſerving applauſe and admiration, and at another cenſure and contempt. — Upon the whole, it ſeems to have been more highly prized, and more honoured, in the early ages of antiquity, than in modern times. Probably becauſe it was leſs common; probably becauſe the neceſſity and utility of it were in many reſpects more immediately felt, and the helps it afforded were more indiſpenſable; or perhaps, becauſe it wore a more venerable or more myſterious countenance, and was attributed to a ſublimer origin. Accordingly, the queen that we read of in our text, as coming from the wealthy Arabia to converſe with Solomon, had a very high opinion of its value. She left her throne and her people, to hear and to improve by the wiſdom, or, which in the language of thoſe times is juſt the ſame, the learning of that monarch. Report having brought the fame of it into thoſe diſtant regions, it at once excited her appetite for novelty and inſtruction; and now, on finding the truth of the matter to exceed even what report had made it, ſhe exclaims in admiration, "Happy are thy men, happy are theſe thy ſervants, which ſtand continually before thee, and that hear thy wiſdom!" Thus ſhewing that ſhe preferred the erudition of Solomon before all his treaſures, before all the ſplendour and magnificence of

of his court. And this judgment does her the more honour, as it is ſo very ſeldom that the great and mighty of the earth are impartial enough to do juſtice to eminent endowments of the mind, and to eſteem them more than their own dazzling diſtinctions.

Let us then, my pious hearers, endeavour alſo to ſettle our judgment on this matter. Many of my audience are learned themſelves, or make literature their principal employment; and moſt of the reſt have much connection and intercourſe with that deſcription of men. For both the one and the other it is highly important to form a proper eſtimate of learning; and though I may poſſeſs but a ſmall ſtock of it myſelf, yet its properties, nature and quality, and its influence on human happineſs, may not be utterly unknown to me; and it is more than poſſible that I may be able to pronounce upon it with the ſtricter impartiality, as I renounce on that ſcore all pretenſions to fame. Let us therefore inveſtigate the value of learning; and to this end firſt make ſome remarks for properly aſcertaining its worth; then ſet that value in its proper light; and laſtly thence draw ſome rules for our conduct towards it.

By erudition or learning, I here underſtand the whole circle of human ſciences and knowledge, that do not immediately relate to the ſatisfying the firſt wants of nature; all knowledge and ſciences that are rather neceſſary and peculiar to a particular claſs or body of men, than to mankind at large; whether

ther otherwiſe they be diſtinguiſhed for diverſity and extent, or for ſolidity and method, be they of the hiſtorical or philoſophical ſpecies, and of more or leſs general utility. Whoever addicts himſelf to any one claſs or kind of ſuch knowledge and ſcience, devotes the greater part of his time and faculties to it, and therein excels others, bears and deſerves the appellation of a man of learning. And, for rightly appretiating the value of this learning, we muſt previouſly make ſeveral remarks.

The firſt and moſt material is this: the value that learning has is not generally proper to it as a final object, but as means ſubſervient to ultimate ends; and this it has in common with moſt of the other privileges and endowments that have a reference to human happineſs. Particular kinds of knowledge, certain branches of learning, poſſeſs indeed an inherent value, an intrinſic and laſting worth; but theſe are few in number. Under this head we may perhaps reckon moſt of our mathematical and aſtronomical knowledge, ſome of the more recondite philoſophical ſtudies, a part of our religious notions; whatever is eternal, unalterable, and everlaſtingly ſerviceable truth; all conceptions and ideas that are of account, in heaven as well as upon earth, among ſuperior intelligences as well as among mankind; and though we may not poſſeſs a great many ſuch ideas and conceptions, yet are we not totally deſtitute of them, and they indiſputably compoſe the moſt precious part of our knowledge. All that comes under this denomination beſides has no value whatever, as an ultimate

ultimate object, but only as ſubordinate means. It is only ſo far deſirable, and is only ſo far deſerving of our eſteem, of our attention and our application, as it exerciſes the mental faculties, procures ourſelves and others innocent, elevated pleaſure, guides us in the track of truth and facilitates the knowledge of it, diffuſes activity among mankind, improves their outward welfare, provides for their accommodation, promotes their ſecurity, and helps them in the proſecution of their affairs, or procures them any other tranſitory benefit. To this head belong the generality of hiſtorical, moſt of the mechanical and philological ſciences, and the greateſt part of the learning of the theologian, of the phyſician, of the lawyer. They are only means, nothing more than implements, by which we may forward and attain certain good purpoſes in our preſent ſtate; and which, when theſe ends are once obtained, loſe abſolutely all their value, and become uſeleſs, like ſcaffoldings that have ſerved their purpoſe. It would however be a folly of the firſt magnitude in any one to deſpiſe and reject them now, ſince they are ſtill neceſſary to the building which is not yet finiſhed.

Hence ſpontaneouſly ariſes a ſecond rule, of uſe to us in forming proper eſtimates of learning and the ſeveral branches of it. It is this: the greater ſervice and general utility it is of, the greater is likewiſe its value. Studies, abſolutely unprofitable, when conſidered at leaſt as means to farther views, are indeed no part at all of learning; many parts

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of it however are unworthy of the painful and indefatigable induſtry, the great application of time and abilities that are beſtowed upon them. Many debaſe and relax the mind, inſtead of elevating and ſtrengthening it; and benumb and contract the heart, inſtead of enlarging it, and ſtimulating it to great and generous emotions. Many alienate ſuch as are employed in them from the true ends of their creation, from their proper perfection, rather than facilitate them in the proſecution of it. Such learned attainments and occupations are indeed of but trifling value; often of much leſs value than the attainments and occupations of the artificer or the labourer; and he that makes them his principal employment has no right to complain, if he be neither more reſpected, nor more happy, than ſo many others of the unlearned, who trifle away their time like him, and diſſipate their powers. No, he alone deſerves to be ſo, and that in a high degree, whoſe learning is in any remarkable mannner beneficial and generally uſeful; who can give an account to himſelf and to others, of what he is attempting and performing for the intereſt of his fellow-creatures; who is effectually kindling more light and calling forth more activity, in himſelf and about him; who is learning to think and to live better himſelf; and is likewiſe mediately or immediately, the occaſion that others think more juſtly and live more prudently or happily.

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A third circumſtance, which falls under conſideration in our reſearches into the real value of learning, eſpecially in regard to particular perſons, is this: the more modeſty and true wiſdom it has to accompany and guide it, the greater is its value. The learning that gives ſcope to pride, ſoon degenerates into inſolence and tyranny; not unfrequently prevents its poſſeſſor from making greater progreſs in knowledge and ſcience; often renders it unſerviceable to others, or of but little uſe; and how very much muſt this detract from its worth! Still leſs value has the learning which has no morally good influence on the mind and manners of the learned man; which allows him to think as meanly, and to act as perverſely and fooliſhly, and as ſlaviſhly to follow the calls of his luſts and paſſions, as the ignorant and the unlearned; and in proportion as it procures but little real and durable advantage to himſelf, ſo much muſt this defect diminiſh its utility in regard of others, and weaken its influence on human happineſs. No, then alone does learning diſplay herſelf in her native dignity, in her full ſplendor, and ſuffer none to doubt of her high value, when ſhe appears in the company of modeſty and wiſdom; when ſhe is not blind to her own defects and failings, and is not aſhamed of her limitations; when ſhe readily communicates herſelf to others; when ſhe rather informs in the ſpirit of meekneſs, than decides in a haughty imperious tone;

tone; when ſhe manifeſts herſelf in generous ſentiments, in a beneficent and active zeal in the cauſe of truth, of virtue, of liberty, of human happineſs, and by an eminently wiſe, manly, virtuous deportment, worthy of the enlightened man.

This once premiſed, my pious hearers, let us more particularly examine wherein the real value of learning conſiſts, and on what grounds it merits our reſpect.

Erudition is firſt mental perfection, and promotes mental perfection; and, if one be a ſpecial and covetable privilege of mankind, then muſt the other be ſo too. The man of learning, who deſerves that name, knows more of truth, ſees farther into the principles and combinations of truths, goes more ſurely to work in the inveſtigation of them, and is therefore leſs liable to be impoſed upon by ſpecious appearances. His acuter ſight takes in more objects, his trained eye explores much farther; he thinks more perſpicuouſly, more profoundly, more juſtly, than the generality of mankind can do; and who but muſt confeſs this to be a perfection, a prerogative? Allow that he ſometimes miſſes of his mark; allow that he is liable to falſe concluſions and errors; let the whole amount of the highly uſeful truths he has made out, clearly explained, or firſt diſcovered, be comparatively never ſo ſmall; yet he has been all that time exerciſing his mental powers, learning to uſe them better, to uſe them with greater dexterity, and has thereby been advancing their eſſential

and laſting perfection. — A thouſand things, it muſt be readily confeſſed, a thouſand things that relate to language, to the hiſtory of nations, of nature and arts, and to other ſciences, the knowledge of which comes under the article of erudition, are in themſelves not at all deſerving of any pains in the ſtudy and inveſtigation of them; but, not to mention the cloſe connection wherein they frequently ſtand with other more important objects, they cannot be inveſtigated and known, cannot be reflected on, methodized, combined, applied, without employing our underſtanding, our ingenuity, our genius, our memory, without exerciſing our mental faculties and ſtrengthening them by that exerciſe; and this undoubtedly communicates a great value and utility to every kind of knowledge which we acquire, not barely in a mechanical and thoughtleſs way, but by conſideration and reflection; it muſt give it a value and utility which will ſtill abide by us, even when that very knowledge has vaniſhed from our remembrance, and paſſed into complete oblivion. Thus, we all learn in our younger years numberleſs things, which we can turn to no account whatever when we are advanced in life, and yet the learning whereof has been of great conſequence to us, as we at the ſame time learned to think, to draw inferences, to determine, to revolve many ſubjects, to comprehend many, and connect many together. — Never neglect then, o ingenuous youth, to learn anything that exerciſes thee in thought, if thou

thou have time and abilities and opportunity for it, though thou perceive not its utility, and though probably thou wilt never be able to uſe it. The real, the greateſt utility it can be of to thee is, that at all events thou wilt be the more rational and the wiſer for it. — Therefore, let no man peremptorily deſpiſe him who is apparently purſuing with earneſtneſs and too much induſtry, matters that, abſtractedly conſidered, are utterly inſignificant, and promiſe no pleaſure or advantage to any. All depends upon the method in which he employs himſelf about them. If he do it with intelligence, with reflection, he may thereby learn to think as conſecutively, as juſtly, as perſpicuouſly as another, who is buſied on the moſt elevated objects. In this reſpect, may even an inferior art, an ordinary trade, be as profitable to the man that properly exerciſes and carries it on as erudition itſelf. Both the one and the other are, in more than one conſideration, nothing elſe but the ſcaffold, whoſe value muſt be determined by the edifice to the building whereof it is ſubſervient.

Learning acquires ſecondly a great value from the liberal and inexhauſtible ſatisfaction which accompanies the inveſtigation and the knowledge of truth. The ſatisfaction enjoyed by the traveller, on exchanging the perplexed and tortuous way, overgrown with thorns and briars, through a diſmal and mazy foreſt, for an even and luminous path, or after the darkneſs of the night perceiving the firſt

rays of the ſun gilding the mountain-tops; is not greater, nor by far ſo great, as that of the thinking man, on perceiving light and order and conſiſtency in his reflections, and that he can thereby proceed nearer to the knowledge of truth. And this pleaſure the man of learning enjoys, not indeed excluſively, but in an extraordinary degree. Every not totally unſucceſsful application of his mental faculties, every enlargement of his horizon, every augmentation of his knowledge and perceptions, every rectification of his ideas and conceptions, every not inattentive glance he can caſt into the immenſe regions of truth, and every ray of light thence reflected on his eyes, procures him this pleaſure. And how diverſified, how inexhauſtible it is! Each ſtone, each mineral, each plant, each animal, each man, each part of man, the whole material and intellectual world, the viſible and the inviſible, the paſt, the preſent and the future, the poſſible and the actual, the creature and the creator; all employ the curioſity, the obſervation and inquiry of the thoughtful ſcholar; all guide him forward on the track of truth; all point out to him more or leſs of it; all ſhew him arrangement and harmony in the whole and in the parts; all lead him to the prime, eternal ſource of being, of life, of power, of perfection; and by theſe very means procure him ſatisfaction, the pureſt, the nobleſt pleaſure. A pleaſure that often riſes to extaſy, when he has overcome any material impediment that checked him in

his courſe of reflections, has obviated ſome difficulty that bewildered him, ſolved ſome knotty point on which he had exerciſed his perſpicacity in vain; when he is enabled to fill up any conſiderable chaſm in his knowledge, to ſee through a ſeries of conceptions with greater perſpicuity, to comprehend more fully ſome part of human ſcience, to find ſome important and fertile principle or elucidation, to make any ſtriking application, any profitable uſe of his knowledge, or to detect a trace of the truths that enſure him a remarkable progreſs in cultivating the field he has choſen. How often, and how amply, muſt theſe pleaſures requite the naturaliſt, the aſtronomer, the geometrician, the philoſopher, the chemiſt, and every other inquiſitive mind, for all its exertions and toils in the ſearch of truth! And how little has ſuch an one to fear, leſt the ſources of theſe pleaſures ſhould ever fail, or the enjoyment of them become ſurfeiting! No, here are fountains of pleaſure that never fail, which flow through all times and all eternities, and become the more exuberant, the oftener and more copiouſly we draw from them. And muſt not the erudition, which procures us pleaſures of this kind, be of great value?

Learning thirdly poſſeſſes a great value, as a means whereby the common intereſt of ſociety is promoted. How greatly have navigation and commerce been benefited by aſtronomical obſervations; how much have chemical reſearches contributed to the improvement and perfection of manufactures;

how much are architecture, tactics, and every ſpecies of mechanical ſcience, indebted to mathematics! What implement is there of the artiſt, of the artizan, of the huſbandman, that is not more or leſs improved and perfected by them? How many productions of nature are underſtood, wrought up, and rendered ſubſervient to many important purpoſes, by the induſtry of the naturaliſt! What beneficial inſtitutions in common and civil life, what conveniences in regard of lodging and furniture, of order and ſafety, of trade and barter, are we not indebted for to learning, and particularly to geometry and its correlative ſciences! How much are we beholden to the ſtudy of law for peace and quiet, and to medicine for life and health, however great the inconveniences of the one may be, and the imperfections of the other! How much agreeable and uſeful knowledge, how many means of refined ſocial pleaſure, and liberal entertainment, have been diffuſed from all theſe ſources among the ſeveral claſſes and orders of men! Compare the condition of a country where ignorance and ſuperſtition reign, with that of another where learning and ſciences flouriſh: how much more barbariſm and ferocity, how much more imperfection and confuſion, will ye find in one than in the other! How many channels of induſtry, of art, of pleaſure, of domeſtic and ſocial happineſs are ſhut up againſt the former, which run and diſperſe themſelves throughout our happy country, bringing life and activity, profit and ſatisfaction,

ſatisfaction, into all our borders, and from which we all daily derive unnumbered benefits of every kind! And how much more profit and pleaſure of theſe various kinds may the whole ſociety promiſe itſelf in future from learning, ſince all men are at preſent far more diſpoſed to render it more generally uſeful and more ſerviceable, to all ranks and deſcriptions of perſons than ever they were before.

Sound learning has, fourthly, a great value, as a preſervative from all kinds of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm. It cheriſhes and extends the light of truth, which that brood of darkneſs cannot endure, and which often ſcares it back into the obſcurity from whence it ſprung. It promotes clear reaſoning, nice inveſtigation, ſagacious doubt, modeſt and diſpaſſionate inquiry into the cauſes, the views, the combination of things. It arms us againſt the illuſion of the ſenſes, of the imagination, of the feelings; againſt the fallacious charms of the extraordinary, the wonderful, the myſterious; againſt the impoſing vizor of peculiar penſiveneſs, myſtical and occult ſcience, beneath which ignorance and fanaticiſm ſo often lurk. Wherever real learning and ſolid ſcience loſe their reſpect and influence, ſuperſtition is ſure to riſe upon their ruins, with all its lamentable and diſaſtrous attendants, ignorance, timidity, fanaticiſm, intolerance, the ſpirit of domination, perſecution, ſpreading terror and thraldom and miſery of various kinds throughout the coun-

try. Curioſity never totally forſakes the human mind. If a man cannot employ it in regular, rational reaſoning, he endeavours to gratify it by conceits and reveries, by excurſions beyond the viſible diurnal ſphere, into the land of apparitions; and ſcenes of deſolation in futurity, are then objects of the firſt magnitude with him. If, in his flights into that world unknown, he has not for his guide an enlightened and well trained underſtanding, but truſts only to obſcure ſenſations, he is liable to deviate into every inſidious by-way, every indirect and crooked road that offers; he encounters the hazard of becoming the puppet of every ſly deceiver, or every diſciple of impoſture. But who can think on all the miſchievous and peſtilent effects of ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm, and not aſcribe great praiſe to erudition, which is always counteracting them, and ſetting bounds to their dominion?

Yet more. Conſidered as a ſtay of religion, learning which is not unworthy of that appellation, is of very great value; and this ſhould render it eminently dear to us, who profeſs and revere religion. The credibility and the divine authority of the chriſtian doctrine reſt at leaſt in part on hiſtorical arguments; and theſe can neither be defended nor known, nor duly weighed, without the help of learning. The underſtanding of the ſacred books, which we revere as the ſources of this doctrine, preſuppoſes a knowledge of languages, of antiquity, and of many other particulars that come under the head

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of learning. If we wiſh to ſee theſe doctrines defended againſt the objections of the infidel and the ſcorner; if we would ſee their reaſonableneſs evinced, ſee them purified from all human commixtures; more unfolded and reduced to a connected and conſiſtent whole; delivered in a manner adapted to the wants of mankind and the exigencies of the times; and if we would have them likewiſe worthy of all acceptation to the profound reaſoner, to the man inclined to doubt; would we hope to ſee them in ſecurity from all abuſe: all this could not be done, but by various ſorts of literary knowledge; not without philoſophical perſpicacity, without an enlightened and well regulated underſtanding. Were it not for learning and ſolid ſcience, religion would ſpeedily degenerate into ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm. Whereas, the more flouriſhing and the more general they become, in a country or among a people: the greater light is diffuſed over religion; the nearer it reverts to its native ſimplicity, its inherent majeſty; and the greater in general muſt its influence be on human perfection and happineſs. Is religion founded on the immortal baſis of truth, and does it comprehend all truth: everything by which the inveſtigation and the knowledge of truth is generally advanced, muſt of neceſſity be favourable and auxiliary to it. And what a value muſt from hence accrue to erudition, in the ſight of every man to whom religion and truth are not indifferent objects!

Laſtly,

Laſtly, learning, when it is and effectuates what it may and ought to be and effectuate, is an excellent preparative to the employment and pleaſures of a ſuperior ſtate after death. Though much, perhaps even the greateſt part, of our knowledge and the ſciences as they are termed, will fall away as totally uſeleſs in the future life, as the toys and playthings of our childiſh years; yet muſt much of the reſt ſtill remain, ſuch as is of a nobler kind, of eternal, unchangeable veracity, of univerſal utility; and afford them, who take it with them into that better world, a greater or leſs advantageous outſet, beyond thoſe who are deſtitute of it. Though, for inſtance, what the aſtronomer knows concerning the heavenly bodies and their relations to each other, be ever ſo little in compariſon with what in the immenſe ſyſtem of the univerſe is concealed from him, yet at leaſt he underſtands ſome few letters in the alphabet of the ſkies, and ſeems in thoſe ſuperior regions ſomewhat leſs a ſtranger than the abſolutely ignorant. But, were it not ſo, my pious hearers, yet the ſcholar, who juſtly bears that name, is always exerciſing his mental faculties in a far ſuperior degree; learns to ſurvey, to comprehend, to combine more objects; raiſes himſelf in meditation farther above what is ſenſible and viſible; habituates himſelf to more intellectual occupations and more refined ſatisfactions; acquires a greater love for truth than for all things elſe; finds in the reſearch and knowledge

ledge of it the pureſt delight; feels more ſenſibly the vanity and emptineſs of all earthly things; feels himſelf more forcibly attracted towards the things that are inviſible, towards ſuch as are infinite and eternal, towards God, the original fountain of all light and all truth, and travels on to his ſuperior ſtate with brighter proſpects, with greater expectations. And muſt not this be a very ſuitable preparative to it?

If ſuch be then the caſe, my pious hearers; if learning be an excellent exercitation and perfection of the human mind; if it procure a man real pleaſure, and the moſt refined and pureſt kinds of pleaſure; if it promote in various ways the general welfare of ſociety; if it be a powerful preſervative from ſuperſtition and fanaticiſm; if it be a ſupport and an auxiliary of true religion; if it have a tendency to fit us, in more than one reſpect, for our future ſuperior ſtate: then is it inconteſtable that it poſſeſſes a real, a great value, that it may contribute and actually does contribute much to human happineſs.

And, now, how ought we to behave in regard to it? The learned, as well as the unlearned, have particular duties incumbent on them in this reſpect. In concluſion, allow me to addreſs a few words to the conſideration of both.

You therefore, my dear friends, who devote yourſelves to learning, or employ yourſelves in it, take it for neither more nor leſs than it really is.

is. Prize and pronounce upon it, in the whole, as in its particular parts, according to their proper worth; uſe it according to its true deſtination. Acknowledge that the generality of it, though ſerviceable and in many reſpects uſeful and neceſſary, yet is not near ſo important as prepoſſeſſion and ſelf-love would probably induce you to believe. Know and feel and confeſs the imperfection, the uncertainty of all human knowledge and ſcience. Frequently contraſt what you know, againſt what you do not and cannot know; what you know with aſſurance, againſt what is only hypothetical and ſlightly probable; what you can actually make uſe of, againſt what is barely inſtrumental and matter of exerciſe, or even deception and error; what you may hope to carry with you into eternity, againſt what will be buried with you, and be loſt in the night of oblivion: and let all this teach you modeſty and humility. Let ſound common ſenſe, the uncorrupted feelings of the heart, the wiſdom that is grounded on experience, and ſhews itſelf in an active and buſy life, have ample juſtice. Reverence and purſue learning only ſo far as it makes you better, more intelligent, more wiſe, more uſeful; and prefer the important to the leſs important, the ſerviceable to the leſs ſerviceable, as often and as much as your circumſtances and the duties of your vocation will allow. Be not jealous of your acquirements, nor parſimonious of your information; rather ſtudy to incorporate all you know that is

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good and uſeful, every truth that is of ſervice to mankind, by every method in your power, into the common ſtock of human knowledge. Let that greater light, which gladdens you, enlighten others alſo; and hide it not from indolence or from timidity, or from mercenary views, from the eyes of the world. Beware however at the ſame time of ſhaking the foundations of morality, or weakening the bands of religion. This, as the friend of mankind, you would not venture to do, even though you were perſuaded that the former were falſe and the latter chimerical; at leaſt, not till you could furniſh your brethren with more ſtable ſupports to their faith and repoſe. No, whatever promotes human perfection and happineſs ſhould be ſacred to you; and true religion, which certainly promotes it moſt, ſhould be moſt ſacred. — Content not yourſelf ſimply with being learned, but endeavour to be ſo in a reſpectable and amiable manner. Beware of the ordinary failings attendant on learning; of unſociableneſs, of miſanthropy, of deſpiſing and depreciating whatever lies not within your ſphere, or relates not to you purſuits. Be not haughty nor domineering; bear with the weak, the ignorant, the erroneous, in the ſpirit of love; put them not to ſhame, but convey to them inſtruction; decide not on all things, and never decide without reaſon; condeſcend to each man's capacity; hearken to their modeſt contradictions with calmneſs; and learn, even from the unlearned, as readily

readily as you teach others. Reſpect the perceptions, the excellencies, the uſeful occupations of other perſons, though they ſhould even ſeem ſtrange to you. Do honour in fine, to learning, by the ſalutary influence you allow it to have on your character and conduct; diſtinguiſh yourſelf even more by generous ſentiments and employments of general utility, than by diffuſive ſcience; and uniformly prefer doing to underſtanding, that is, virtue to knowledge.

And you, my friends, who belong not to the claſs of the learned, deſpiſe not that with which you are unacquainted, or of which you have only a glimmering and faint conception. Rather eſteem and prize that of which you are able to diſcern a little by a few reflections, ſufficient however to ſhew you that it is of great and various ſervice to you and to the whole community. Contemn not the thing itſelf, becauſe of its accidental abuſes. Attribute not the errors and imperfections of the learned to learning itſelf. Require not of perſons, who in general lead and are forced to lead a retired life, and who ſeldom have a mind totally diſengaged, the vivacity, nor the poliſhed breeding, nor the agreeable manners, nor the intereſt in all that paſſes, which you may expect from perſons who live in the great world, and are preſent in all public diverſions and pleaſures. Reſpect the body of the learned, though perhaps all that belong to it are not reſpectable. Countenance and promote learning

learning of every kind, by the eſteem you ſhew to the learned, by the helps you afford them, by the aſſiſtance wherewith you facilitate their frequently expenſive undertakings and purſuits, by the honour and rewards you beſtow on their induſtry, and for the ſervice they render the public. But profit likewiſe by the greater light which learning diffuſes around you. Avail yourſelves of it for rectifying and extending your knowledge, as far as is conſiſtent with your calling and your other obligations. But ſtrive not for ſuch learning, as in your ſtation cannot be acquired without neglecting your moſt important occupations and affairs, and which, in the degree you would probably wiſh to poſſeſs it, would more confuſe than ſettle you, would be of more prejudice than benefit to you. Neither pretend to an acquaintance with ſuch kinds of knowledge and ſcience as are either totally unknown to you, or of which you ſcarcely know more than the name; at moſt, have only ſome general notions. In many caſes, it is far better to be ignorant, and not to be aſhamed of one's ignorance, than to put up with ſuperficial knowledge, and then to be as proud of it as if it were real learning.

Laſtly, let all of us, my pious hearers, both learned and unlearned, ſo think and ſo live as men ſedulous to promote the benefit of one and the ſame family; as members of one body, whereof one is the eye, another the ear, a third the hand, a fourth the foot, and who are all equally neceſ-

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ſary to the ſupport and well-being of the whole body, whereof none can diſpenſe with any of the others without injury. So ſhall we all fulfil our duty, all worthily maintain our ſtation, and reach the great end of our creation; all learn to love and eſteem each other more and more, and each by means of the other become conſtantly more happy.

SERMON XXXVII.

The Value of more enlightened Times.

GOD, father of lights, whoſe glory fills the ethereal throne, from whom all good and only perfect gifts proceed, we likewiſe are irradiated and cheered by thy light, the light of truth as well as the light of the ſun: and how much more are we illumined by the former, than ſo many other people and nations, who ſcarcely diſcern a few faint emanations of it. Yes, thou haſt imparted to us, as men and as chriſtians, many eminent means of inſtruction, of knowledge, of perpetually increaſing illumination and intellectual perfection! Thou haſt tranſplanted us from the kingdom of darkneſs into the kingdom of light. And how much happier are we thus become, and how much happier may we ſtill be! How greatly has thy kindneſs thus facilitated to us the path of life, alleviated the accompliſhment of our duties, the attainment of thy great deſigns upon us in the vaſt eternal ſcheme involving all! From what tormenting

ſolicitudes, from what oppreſſive burdens, from what ſervile fear, from what terrors has this inſtance of thy mercy freed us! By having brought us to the light, thou haſt called us to liberty, to inward peace, to purer virtue, to higher happineſs. If this light be yet not ſo generally diffuſed among us, not ſo unclouded, not ſo vivid as entirely to diſpel the darkneſs, ſtill the dawn allows us to hope for the bright rays of the morning, and then for the meridian blaze. Yes, thanks be to thee, o Father of light, for the genial riſing and the gradual progreſs of it! Oh cauſe it to ſhine ever brighter, to ſpread ever farther; and grant us by its influence to become ever wiſer and better! Grant that none of us may be guilty of ſhutting their eyes againſt it; none of us impede its activity and progreſs; none of us abuſe it to ſin, none of us walk in darkneſs! But let each of us zealouſly ſtrive to advance conſtantly farther in the knowledge of the truth, and by the truth to become inceſſantly more free, inceſſantly more virtuous, and inceſſantly more accompliſhed! May each of us in his place, and according to his ſtation, prove a burning and a ſhining light enlightening far around him, and promoting the greater intellectual improvement of his brethren as far as he is able! Aſſiſt us powerfully to this end, moſt gracious Father! Teach us to recognize our ſpecial privilege, and ever more faithfully to uſe it. Grant that we may all walk before thee as children of light, and thus aſſert the dignity to which thou haſt promoted

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us as men and as chriſtians. Bleſs the reflections we are now about to make on theſe important objects. Let them awaken in us the ſentiments of gratitude and joy for them; let them excite in us a ſatisfaction and zeal in the unwearied proſecution of our courſe to the prize of perfection. Theſe our ſupplications we offer up unto thee in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, our lord; and ſteadfaſtly relying on his promiſes, addreſs thee further as he preſcribed us: Our father, &c.

EPHES. v. 8.

Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light.

THE times we live in, my pious hearers, are frequently called enlightened times; and in fact they are not abſolutely undeſerving of that epithet. Leſs ignorance in general prevails at preſent, leſs ſuperſtition and blind credulity, than in the days of our forefathers. At preſent it muſt be owned, far more perſons reflect upon moral and religious ſubjects than perhaps ever did before. There are now a hundred perſons who employ themſelves in reading, and in acquiring ſome notions and ſcience, for one that did ſo, I will not ſay in the days of yore, but even at the commencement of the preſent, and in the courſe of the laſt century. Many kinds of knowledge are now diſſemi-

nated amongſt all claſſes and conditions of men, which were heretofore confined to the learned. In our times a man is aſhamed of many errors, many prejudices, many ſuperſtitions, childiſh opinions and uſages, which formerly were held ſacred by princes as well as their ſubjects, by nobles as well as the vulgar. At preſent the purſuit of truth, and the free inveſtigation of it, are more general than formerly. Accordingly there actually is more intellectual light, there is a greater proportion of knowledge, there are more means and incentives to it among mankind, though neither the one nor the other be near ſo great and ſo general as numbers pretend. — But does this greater intellectual light give our times a real precedence above the foregoing? Are they actually more valuable on that account? On this head the judgments are extremely various, according to the point of view in which the matter is beheld.

Indeed this acceſſion of light, particularly at firſt, and before it be come to a certain degree of perfection, is attended with many evils of various magnitudes. It excites doubt; it makes the faith of many weak perſons to waver; it puffs up the proud; it often begets ſcoffers; it occaſions at times ſad confuſions and diſturbances; it is often miſuſed by the wicked, for excuſing and palliating their vices and follies; in ſome reſpects it promotes or favours a diſpoſition to luxury and oſtentation, too great a propenſity to diſſipation and public amuſements;

amuſements; it probably weakens and enervates many, by refining their taſte, and employing their mind to the detriment of their body; it miſleads numbers to meddle with things quite out of their ſphere, with which they have no concern whatever, and thereby to neglect more ſerious affairs; it frequently renders certain ſerviceable and uſeful inſtitutions, methods, cuſtoms, writings leſs effective, as people are enabled to ſpy out their defects and errors, but are not yet able to ſupply their places with better. All this is undeniable. And yet the greater proficiency of a nation in knowledge remains, notwithſtanding, a real and deſirable advantage; it is always far preferable to its oppoſite. The evils of the former are not general; they are at leaſt only tranſient, and will be far overbalanced by the good which is the natural conſequence of that proficiency. And this, my pious hearers, is the topic that I intend now to diſcuſs. We are doubtleſs a people greatly enlightened, and we begin to enjoy the advantages of our proficiency. As the apoſtle in our text ſays to the chriſtians: "Now are ye light in the Lord: walk as children of light:" as chriſtians ye are brought to the knowledge of truth, think and live as perſons who know the truth; ſo may we alſo addreſs you: as men and as chriſtians, you are in poſſeſſion of more means of inſtruction and improvement than many other, perhaps than the generality of perſons and nations; you are already then capable of being

farther enlightened than they; it therefore behoves you to conduct yourselves conformably to these privileges. In order to incite you to this, my pious hearers, I will represent to you the value of the greater intellectual improvement of a people or community; and then deduce from it a few rules for your conduct.

The gradual improvement of mankind is a natural consequence of the constitutions and regulations which God has established in the world, and the course he has prescribed to the human mind. As, in nature, the dawn succeeds the night, which in its turn gives place to the bright effulgence of day, and every creature feels itself produced anew to life, incited to the fresh exertion of its powers, and to proceed onward to its object: so likewise the knowledge and perceptions of mankind are perpetually increasing in extent and perspicuity, and their minds are constantly struggling for greater activity, for higher perfection, whenever the progress of the former and the efforts of the latter are not violently obstructed and confined. This general proficiency in knowledge is therefore perfectly in the order of providence, as a part of the plan laid down by God, in his moral administration. It must therefore be good; it must have a real and great value, even though we should not allow it. In this manner are we taught by religion to judge of it, and our reflections convince us that this judgment is true. For, how various and considerable are the advantages

that

that accrue from a more copious acceſſion of light to mankind, to the nation that has it to rejoice in!

Firſt, wherever it exiſts, it begets a far greater and more complete exertion and application of the faculties of the human mind. This no one will deny. But muſt not this uſe, this exerciſe, this improvement of our nobleſt faculties, be highly deſirable; and muſt it not be highly deſirable in a view to all mankind? Is not the deſtination of all mankind in eſſentials the ſame? Are they not, in this ſtage of their exiſtence, to riſe from ſenſual to rational creatures? Are they not all to think, juſtly and correctly to think, and to ſtudy to raiſe themſelves more and more above the viſible and the preſent? Are they not all capable of a continual progreſs? Have they not all the ſame natural prediſpoſitions, capacities and powers? Can that which brings theſe prediſpoſitions into action, which unfolds and exerciſes theſe capacities and powers, be bad and hurtful? Or are they only to be formed, unfolded, exerciſed by the learned, by men of ſuperior ſtations? Wherefore then do all men poſſeſs them in common? Or is it right and fit that this formation, this expanſion, this exerciſe of the powers of the human mind, ſhould be arbitrarily limited and controuled? Who may arrogate to himſelf this right over his brethren? Do not theſe limitations, ſo far as they are juſt or expedient, neceſſarily ariſe from the particular condition of perſons, of times, of circumſtances, of reſources, of the actual

ſtate of things? And if, in general, theſe limitations were further dilated, what harm would enſue? Or is truth perhaps the excluſive property of the learned, or of the ruler, or of the opulent and noble? Is not every man appointed and called to the knowledge of truth? Is it not honourable and ſalutary to every man? Granting that it is liable to be miſapprehended by ſome, to be abuſed by others. Is it always to be miſapprehended, always to be abuſed? Does not the morning ſucceed to the day-break, and to that again the full ſplendor of noon? Should there be then no dawn, leſt any one, deceived by its feeble light, might ſtumble, or loſe his way? Is then the night more favourable to the traveller than the dawn? Is error, is ignorance, always harmleſs? Are not the evils that attend them much greater and more various, than thoſe that may ariſe from the miſapplication of truth? No, whoever eſteems and loves mankind, his brethren, who underſtands their nature and appointment, will ſpread light around him whenever he can, and is unconcerned about the conſequences it may produce; ſince this he knows for certain, that light is better than darkneſs. No, it is only the impoſtor, only the tyrant in the ſtate and in the church that can be intereſted in it; it can only be neceſſary to the attainment of their deſpotic deſigns, that men ſhould be kept in blindneſs and error, ſhould be withheld from approaching the light, leſt they ſhould ſee through the veil flung acroſs their intentions and actions.

actions. It is written, and may well be applied to this ſubject, "Every one that doeth evil, hateth the light, neither cometh to the light, leſt his deeds ſhould be reproved." And for the ſame reaſon it is, that he hindereth others from coming to the light, as far as in his power lieth.

Farther. Where a greater improvement of the intellectual faculties prevails, there is a more complete and more elevated uſe and enjoyment of the beauties and bleſſings wherewith God has embelliſhed our earth, and by which he has revealed to us his greatneſs and glory. What are all the beauties, all the wonders of nature, all its bounties and delights, to the unthinking man, who lives amongſt an unenlightened people! How little will they be obſerved by him! How much leſs will they be enjoyed in rational conſciouſneſs and a ſoothing elevation of the mind to God! How ſeldom uſed to the ends for which they preſent and offer themſelves to him! How vainly do the heavens and the earth declare to him the glory of God, the Creator and Father of the univerſe! Cold and thankleſs he ſees them with barren ſurprize; he diverts himſelf with them, indeed, as a child is amuſed with the bright ſparks he perceives in the firmament at night, and the variegated colours with which the face of the earth is adorned; he tramples under foot, with equal indifference, plants and flowers and creeping things; and takes no farther intereſt in them all, than as they bring immediate advantage or detriment

to

to him. "His belly cleaveth unto the ground," and ſo does his ſpirit alſo; he ſeldom raiſes himſelf above the viſible and the preſent; and remains much cloſer allied to the beaſts of the field than to ſpirits and ſuperior beings. Confined to the narrow circle of his terrene occupations, and the pleaſures of ſenſe, he leaves the ſun and the moon and the ſtars to riſe and ſet, the parts of the day and the ſeaſons of the year to perform their ſtated revolutions, one wonderful diſplay of the ſcenery of nature to follow on another, without aſking himſelf a ſingle queſtion about the cauſes, the deſigns, the combination of theſe things; without rejoicing in them with conſciouſneſs and reflection; without being ſenſible to the greatneſs of God, to the bounty of his heavenly Father, and to his own happineſs. And is this truly a ſtate, this the behaviour becoming a man? Does he thus maintain the poſt he fills on earth as a rational creature, as the prieſt of nature? Does he thus forſooth reach the end for which God has encompaſſed him with ſo many beauties and bleſſings, with ſo many demonſtrations of his power, of his wiſdom and goodneſs, and granted him a mind to underſtand them, and a heart to feel them? And muſt not the greater intellectual improvement, which promotes this end, and opens to every not abſolutely inattentive man, at once the book of nature and his own eyes to peruſe it, be agreeable to the will of the author of nature and of man! Muſt it not poſſeſs a really great value?

A greater

A greater intellectual improvement thirdly delivers mankind from many degrading and oppreſſive ſhackles of ſuperſtition and ſervile fear. Allowing that the lower and more numerous claſs of men require narrower limits and a tighter rein, if we would have them not abuſe their faculties, nor neglect their duties: yet to this end neither ſuperſtition nor thraldom are neceſſary, and evils that could only be guarded againſt by ſuch means would ceaſe to be evils. No, even in this reſpect we are not permitted to do evil that good may come. Superſtition and bondage far too deeply degrade the human creature; deface in him by far too much the image and the lineaments of God, his creator; keep him by much too remote from the true end of his being; are much too manifeſtly at ſtrife with his perfection and happineſs: for us not to prize, revere and promote, as matters of the higheſt moment, whatever can ſecure or deliver him from them; and this a greater degree of light undoubtedly does. It diſpels a thouſand and a thouſand idle terrors, which formerly perplexed and tormented mankind; a thouſand kinds of impoſture and error which formerly held them in cruel bondage. It is only by ſuch intellectual improvement, that the childiſh and pernicious belief in ſpectres, in necromancy and witchcraft, in ſupernatural arts and ſciences, in the authority and influence of evil ſpirits, is weakened and deſtroyed. And how much does ſuch credulity diſhonour and diſgrace the man, the chriſtian, the worſhiper

worſhiper of the only true God! How inconſiſtently does it occaſion him to think, and how abſurdly and fooliſhly to act! How often does it deprive him of all ſpirit to good actions, and how often miſlead him into ſhocking crimes! What anxious perturbations and horrors purſue him wherever he goes, and how ſeldom can he rejoice in exiſtence! — And how can true religion and ſolid piety find place, where ſuperſtition and ſervile dread prevail! But are true religion and ſolid piety, are filial love to God and filial ſatisfaction in him, is the rational and genial enjoyment of life, the heritage of only a choſen few, or at moſt of ſome ranks and claſſes of men? Are they not the property of mankind as men; of the chriſtian as a chriſtian? Can their ſway become ever too general, or be too firmly eſtabliſhed? Can their influence on human conduct and on human happineſs ever be too great? And, if that be not poſſible, who can deny the value of that intellectual improvement, whereby they are ſo much advanced, or who ſhall preſume to preſcribe it bounds? No, whoever does ſo, muſt, though probably he will not confeſs it to himſelf, muſt doubt of the truth, and hold the grounds of religion to be very tottering and inſecure, or the fear that either the one or the other might ſuffer by it would never enter his mind.

The more the times are enlightened, the more favourable they are to true religion. Indeed, not to every religion; not to the appendages and commixtures

tures by which even the true religion has been in all times encumbered and disfigured. These must assuredly by degrees fall off, where greater lights and free investigation obtain. But is this to be set down to the account of profit or loss? Is it to be dreaded or desired by the friend of truth, the friend of mankind? Is it not those human appendages which so much restrain and enfeeble the effects of true religion, that render what is called religion so unprofitable to most men, and to many even mischievous? Examine the religion of an unenlightened nation, of a nation where implicit faith prevails. In regard of the generality of its professors, is it anything more than a string of sentences repeated by rote, than a round of ceremonies, than lip-service, than self-deceit? The grossest conceptions of the deity, with a consequent mean, servile, childish conduct towards him; the most superstitious notions of the miraculous efficacy of certain words and solemn rites and outward actions, and a stone-blind confidence in these words and rites and actions; a tormenting scrupulosity about indifferent things, and inconsiderate disregard to the most important; slavish fears and idle hopes; zeal without knowledge; faith without virtue; devotion without charity; austere observance of arbitrary impositions and injunctions, and a general relaxation of indispensable obligations: this is, generally speaking, the religion of every nation where men shun the light, and refuse it admission to the human mind. And is then such a religion

ligion indeed ſo reſpectable, ſo ſalutary, that I ſhould eſteem it inviolable and unimprovable, that it muſt be ſecured againſt all free inveſtigation, and ſcreened from the light? Admit, that this inveſtigation, that this light, may be attended by unbelief in one perſon, a diſpoſition to cavil in another, and in a third by indifferency. Will this be the fruit of them in all men, muſt they have theſe effects for ever? Will they not produce in many, will they not probably in time be productive of ſound knowledge of the truth, and of inward conviction of it, in the generality of men? And do we not find, that where darkneſs and ignorance prevail, as much at leaſt is found of unbelief, of doubt, of indifferency in reference to the moſt eſſential points, and perhaps ſtill more? And if the number of the outward profeſſors of religion were reduced, what would it loſe by the defection of ſuch falſe or cold friends? Would not the rational faith, the belief, founded on diſcuſſion and conviction, of the reſt, be productive of more benefit, promote real virtue and happineſs in them and around them, ſo much the more? — No, true religion needs never to ſhun the light; and he that diffuſes this, is at the ſame time extending the reign of happineſs and virtue. The chriſtian, ſays our text, is light in the Lord; if, then, he would maintain this character, he muſt behave like a child of light, as a friend and promoter of it.

Enlightened

Enlightened times are fifthly propitious to virtue. It is true, that proficiency in knowledge and virtue do not always proceed with equal pace. Nay, the former may eventually be detrimental to the latter: but aſſuredly not upon the whole. Yes, the virtues of the cœnobite, the virtues of the hermit, the virtues of the fanatic of every denomination, if any will call them by that name, are confeſſedly ſufferers by the diſſemination of knowledge; they are plants that thrive better in the boſom of darkneſs than by an influx of light. But certainly not the virtues of the uſeful citizen, of the ſenſible man, of the true chriſtian! What is virtue, if it be not founded on examination and choice, but is the effect of neceſſity, of conſtraint, of ſervile fear, or of mere mechanical habit? Does it deſerve that venerable name? Is it indeed conſiſtent with itſelf? Can it have much inward ſtrength and ſolidity? Does it confer any honour upon the man? Will it guide and govern him in concealment as well as in the eyes of the world, in common and familiar life as well as in the ſolemn offices of devotion or in civil affairs, in the enjoyment of liberty and pleaſure as well as under the heavy hand of power, or beneath the preſſure of misfortunes? No, only that virtue is thoroughly deſerving of the name which is a daughter of light, the reſult of plain perceptions and inward conviction, which is founded on a true knowledge of our nature, our preſent and future appointment, our carriage towards God and man, towards viſible and inviſible

viſible things. She alone is always equal; reſts upon firm, immoveable foundations; is ever the ſame in all times, in all places, in all conditions; exalts and dignifies whatever a man does; accompanies him wherever he is, and never deprives him of her counſel and ſupport. She alone wants neither outward coercion nor mechanical impulſe, and finds in herſelf inducement and ability enough for doing conſtantly what is right and convenient, what is fair and honourable, what is the beſt in every emergency. Admit that we may ſuppoſe ſuch a virtue where there is no great degree of intellectual improvement: but muſt not whatever promotes and extends the latter be, ſooner or later, favourable to the former? How much more ſenſible and tender muſt the moral ſenſe, the conſcience of the enlightened man, be! How many more arguments, and how much higher and nobler arguments muſt he bring forward to his mind, whenever he has to chuſe between good and evil, or between good and better! How much farther muſt his ſight pierce into the remoter conſequences of his undertakings and actions! How much more accurately muſt he apply the general rules of his conduct to every particular circumſtance; how much more eaſily connect the preſent with the future! How much more nicely will he diſcern ſemblance from truth, what has only the ſpecious appearance of virtue, from virtue herſelf! How much leſs will he be ſatisfied with only the inferior degrees of it!

No, fear not, ye friends of Virtue, that the reſpect of your friend can be diminiſhed among mankind, or her dominion contracted, by your enlargement of the kingdom of light. Truth and virtue are ſiſters, they are inſeparably connected together; the true votaries of the one are alſo true votaries of the other; the prevalence of the latter is ſo much the more unreſtrained, by how much the former is extended and advanced; their empire is one and the ſame.

In enlightened times ſixthly mankind are more ſociable, are brought nearer together, connect themſelves more intimately with each other, and by more various ties. Their manners are rendered milder, more agreeable; their converſation more entertaining; their intercourſe more pleaſant and affectionate; their deſires and endeavours to ingratiate themſelves with each other are greater. The higher and lower ſtations and claſſes of men are leſs diſſevered, intermingle more, have more common purſuits and pleaſures; and thus the pride of the one is abated, and the decent confidence of the other encouraged. Social pleaſures in enlightened times are multiplied, refined, heightened. They are, in part, derived from ſources abſolutely ſhut up to an unenlightened people. The hiſtory of nature and art, of the generations of men and the planting of nations, perſonal and foreign experiences and obſervations, in one caſe, furniſh the richeſt and moſt ample materials for diſcourſe, for a uſeful as well as agreeable exerciſe of the underſtanding, the ſagacity, the diſ-

cernment, the wit, the imagination, for the maintenance and ſupport of rational cheerfulneſs and mirth. Every man is more earneſt to preſent himſelf on the moſt favourable ſide, to exchange information of one kind for information of another, and to impart as much ſatisfaction and delight, as to receive. And muſt not this be a covetable privilege above the condition of unenlightened men, whoſe manners are generally rude and ferocious, whoſe pleaſures are altogether ſenſual, whoſe diverſions are merely riotous and noiſy, whoſe perceptions are to the laſt degree contracted, whoſe converſations are commonly frivolous, whoſe mental faculties are undeveloped and unexerciſed, and whoſe deportment is ſeldom agreeable, but much oftener inſolent and diſguſting? — And muſt not the advantages of the former be in perfect harmony with the intentions of religion and nature? Is it not the aim of both to unite men progreſſively more, to inſpire them with more and more love and eſteem for each other, to render them continually more uſeful and agreeable to one another, uniformly more inclined to unfold their mutual capacities and powers by ſocial wants and propenſities, by ſocial buſineſſes and pleaſures, by all theſe means to improve the ſum of their ſocial happineſs, and thus conſtantly to approximate them to the true end of their exiſtence, as one ſingle cloſely compacted family of relatives, dwelling together and making each other happy? Grant however that this greater ſociableneſs, this refine-

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ment of manners, this intermixture of ranks, this extended action and activity, may have their unavoidable inconveniences and disadvantages. Grant that they often degenerate into vanity and frivolity; that they frequently are accompanied by dissimulation and falsehood; allow that they dissipate too much the attention and the faculties of many; allow that at times they infringe on the rules of strict propriety. Upon the whole, they always effect by far more good than harm, occasion far more happiness than misery; are always a step in advance towards the perfection of human nature, an alleviation and sweetener of the troubles of this terrestrial life.

Enlightened times are productive of still more good. The situation and professions of man are more dignified; and therefore he has inducements to fill more worthily the former and better to prosecute the latter. Indeed the first beams of stronger light often produce quite contrary effects. The youth who thinks he has acquired some knowledge and refined his taste, may easily be misled to despise the situation and profession of his forefathers, and to neglect the affairs of it, imagining himself capable of greater and more elevated concerns. But is this evil, which only obtains in particular instances, and for the most part is soon remedied by the punishment that follows it, or by maturer judgment, is this to be compared with the general and lasting evils which the defect of improvement in this respect

naturally brings on? How deplorable is the moral condition of a people, where no one ſees farther than the contracted ſphere of his art, his profeſſion, his trade; where no one is intereſted about what happens otherwiſe than as it regards himſelf; no one thinks on the combination of the whole and on his influence upon it; no one acquires any knowledge but what he abſolutely wants; none ventures to tread out of the track which his ſires and grandſires trod before him: where every one works and employs himſelf more by compulſion than inclination; where every one is actuated only by ſelf-intereſt and guided by cuſtom; and if he have any ſurplus of time or means from what his mechanical labours require, he knows not what to do with either, and how to employ them! But on the other hand, let light once have made conſiderable progreſs amongſt a people; let men of all claſſes and conditions have learnt to reflect more; let them have acquired greater knowledge of their appointment and that of their brethren; be better acquainted with the wiſe œconomy of God upon earth, with the true value and coherence of things; be better informed in what real honour and dignity, in what perfection and happineſs conſiſt; let them ſet about whatever they undertake and do, leſs mechanically, with more rational conſideration: how quickly will every man learn to prize his ſtation, to underſtand the neceſſity and utility of it, to carry on the buſineſs it requires on more liberal principles and in a more dignified

dignified manner, to enjoy the benefits it procures him more rationally and cheerfully, and to be in all reſpects more uſeful to the community! And how much more will he thus promote his ſatisfaction and his mental perfection! How differently will he find himſelf repaid for his diligence and induſtry! When can he be deficient in opportunities of uſeful employment, and in ſources of manly recreation, even out of his peculiar circle! How important, how agreeable muſt the labours and affairs of the countryman, the artiſt, the merchant, the artificer, by this means become, when he proſecutes them with a liberal mind, free from prejudices, with an underſtanding cultivated and accuſtomed to reflection, and feels the value of all he does! And how conſiderably would all thus be gainers! Indeed we are ſtill very far ſhort of that degree of culture. But if it be deſirable, then muſt likewiſe the way that leads to it be good, though it be beſet with many obſtructions. Even the beſt field is not entirely free from weeds; much leſs that which has ſo long lain fallow, which has ſcarcely been begun to be tilled, and which is ſown with grain that can never be perfectly clean and unmixed.

More enlightened times are laſtly preparative to that better ſtate which awaits us after death; and this ſo ſurely, as in that ſtate knowledge of truth and ſpiritual perfection compoſe the foundation of our ſuperior felicity. I am ſenſible that at preſent we can form but very faint, indefinite ideas of our

future ſtate, and can know but extremely little of the peculiar occupations and pleaſures of it. I am firmly perſuaded likewiſe, as I obſerved in a late diſcourſe, that moſt of our knowledge, conſidered as knowledge, of whatever ſpecies or kind it may be, muſt there fall away as totally uſeleſs; and that in this reſpect the enlightened man, the man enriched with all the treaſures of learning, will have no great advantage over the unlettered and ignorant. This however is very certain, that our future life is linked to the preſent, that it is a ſequel of it, that the degree of inward perfection we here attain will determine the point of perfection of which we ſhall there be capable. This however is very certain, that in that, as well as in the preſent ſtate, we ſhall think, ſhall inveſtigate truth, perceive truth: that we ſhall do all this as men, and that it will be ſo much the more eaſy or difficult for us to do this, we ſhall do it ſo much better or worſe, as we have more or leſs exerciſed ourſelves in it here: accordingly, whatever exerciſes us in thought, whatever promotes intellectual perfection; therefore muſt greater proficiency in intellectual improvement as the ſtrongeſt incentive and the beſt means to that end, be preparative to that ſuperior ſtate; therefore muſt enlightened times have a real and great value in this reſpect alſo. Are we already in this world, the children of light; do we here already live in the kingdom of light; are we eagerly deſirous of every ray of it, however feeble: then muſt we become

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the fitter for its brighter influx, for its perfect ſplendor, in a better world!

This will ſuffice, my pious hearers, for diſplaying the great value of a conſiderable progreſs in intellectual acquirements, and for placing it beyond all doubt. Let us now proceed to draw a few inferences from it in regard to our conduct.

If you are ſenſible to the worth of this intellectual advancement, uſe all diligence to turn that portion of it you are bleſſed with to moſt profit; and cauſe it to produce in you that good which it has a tendency to produce. The more enlightened the times and the people, in which, and amongſt whom you live; the more ſhould you be aſhamed of ignorance, of ſuperſtition, of implicit faith, of thoughtleſſneſs and indifference in reference to matters which it behoves all men, and conſequently you, to know. Therefore, ſhut not your eyes againſt the light that ſhines around you. Walk not in darkneſs, ſince the day begins to appear. In regions where all is dark, where ignorance and ſuperſtition prevail without controul: there no man indeed need be aſhamed of being ignorant and ſuperſtitious, to grope his way in the dark, and to ſtumble or fall at every ſtep he takes; for there one is as impotent and wretched as another, and yet neither believes himſelf either wretched or weak. But, to prefer darkneſs to the light that beams upon our eyes; to ſtumble and to fall in a path irradiated by the ſun, as though it were ſhrouded in the deepeſt night; to remain ſtill igno-

rant and ſuperſtitious amidſt all the means to knowledge and a rational faith; this indeed degrades a man, this renders him groſsly criminal. And this, my dear friends, may be more or leſs the caſe with you. "The night is far ſpent," may we likewiſe exclaim to you with an apoſtle, the night is far ſpent; "the day is at hand," the dawn has already appeared: "it is high time to awake out of ſleep." The time is over and gone, when free reflection and inquiry was a crime, and implicit belief meritorious: none of you, except by his own fault, can be deficient in means and inducements to reflection, to reſearch, to the augmentation and improvement of his knowledge. Avail yourſelves of theſe means and inducements, uſe them like men endowed with reaſon, and as chriſtians who are called to liberty. Remain not ſupine on the ſpot where tradition, where vulgar prejudice and old wives' ſaws delivered down from age to age have brought you, as if they were the boundaries of all human knowledge. Implicitly follow no human leader; from children proceed to be men, who are learning to think for themſelves, to go alone, and to proceed with a firm and ſteady ſtep along the path of truth. To think and act upon th roughly tried and ſure principles; conſtantly to be purſuing greater light, farther certainty; to love truth above all things and to receive it with an open heart, without regard to prevailing opinions and outward circumſtances, as it appears to you: is what ſhould diſtinguiſh you from leſs enlightened men,

men, and your times from the times of ignorance and darkneſs.

Farther. If you confeſs the great value of intellectual improvement to a nation, then let every one of you promote it according to his ſtation and in proportion to his abilities. Particularly you who are teachers of the people, or are farther advanced in knowledge than the reſt. But do it with that prudence and affection, which ſhould guide and actuate us in all our affairs, and moſt in the moſt important. Every man is not capable of every truth. Every manner of producing and of diſſeminating even the moſt generally uſeful truths, is not the beſt. Few perſons are ſtrong and liberal minded enough at once to comprehend and adopt and make a proper uſe of truths hitherto unknown to them, or even a conſiderable part of them. A bright effulgence of light, not making its approaches by degrees, but ſuddenly intromitted in all its force, frequently dazzles more than it enlightens. No, in the moral as in the natural world, the tranſition from the darkneſs of night to the full blaze of noon muſt come on by degrees, if mankind are to enjoy that light, and not be forced to ſhut their eyes againſt it. Take heed then not to favour falſehood and error by any means; and ſtill more, not to profeſs and to teach them as verity. This is horrible high-treaſon againſt truth, and debaſes every man that does it, even though he do it in really good intentions. But you need not therefore directly contend

tend againſt every error; not furiouſly attack every-thing that either is or appears to you to deſerve that name: otherwiſe, you may at the ſame time ſhake the foundations of truth, which is often in more than one reſpect connected with error, and thus bar it from all acceſs to the heart. As little need you beſtow or obtrude every truth, without diſtinction or exception, upon every human mind. As every kind of grain will not flouriſh in every ſoil, ſo neither is every truth adapted to the comprehenſion of every individual. Even the proper field requires previous culture before it can be ſown with any reaſonable expectation of a plentiful harveſt. — Are you ambitious of contributing to the intellectual improvement of your brethren, begin by ſetting their attention and curioſity in motion; bring them to the conſcious ſenſe of their imperfections, their intellectual wants; induce them to think for themſelves and aſſiſt them in their reaſonings: conduct them to the track of truth, and remove the principal impediments and obſtructions out of their way; make them ſee what they already know and believe in a clearer light, or underſtand it with greater perſpicuity, and thus accuſtom them to think with calmneſs and preciſion, and make them deſirous of greater light. By this means you will beſt carry on your attacks againſt levity, ſloth, ſenſuality, indifferency in religious matters, the low, ſervile fear of man, falſe ſcrupuloſity, hypocritical piety; and thus ſtop up the ſprings of error and ſuperſtition. Render truth

truth reſpectable and amiable to all men, by the modeſty and meekneſs with which you deliver it, by the hilarity and ſerenity with which you poſſeſs and diſplay it, by the influence it has on your temper and manners. Recommend and diſperſe all good writings, that promote reflection among mankind, and are favourable to the knowledge of truth. Pay particular attention to the inſtruction and formation of young perſons, and thus lay the foundation of greater proficiency for the next generation.

In fine, if you confeſs the value of greater intellectual improvement, and actually enjoy the benefits of it; walk, as we are exhorted to do in our text, as children of light. Let your light ſo ſhine before men, that they, ſeeing your good works, may glorify your father who is in heaven. Live as men who profeſs the truth, and are become wiſe and free by the knowledge of it. Let its light not merely have an influence on your mind, but let it govern your heart and actuate your whole demeanour. Be faithful to your convictions. Exhibit your character as much, and even more, by generous ſentiments and good deeds, than by juſt conceptions. Light, that does not at once animate, warm and fertilize, knowledge that does not make us wiſer and better, is of no great value, is frequently more prejudicial than uſeful to us. Your progreſs in knowledge ſhould be not ſo much an ultimate object, as means to higher aims; means to purer virtue, to greater perfection and happineſs. The truth

that

that reigns in your ideas ſhould likewiſe reign in your feelings, in your views and endeavours, in your diſpoſitions and actions, in your whole deportment. Only by judging in every concern, by being diſpoſed in every circumſtance, and by acting in every occurrence, as the nature and conſtitution of it requires, and is conſiſtent with your correlative ſituations, will you be ever advancing nearer to perfection and to its ſupreme and eternal original, the deity; only thus the knowledge of truth can and will become to you a never-failing, a conſtantly augmenting ſource of happineſs.

SERMON XXXVIII.

The Value of Afflictions and Tribulations.

GOD, parent and lord of univerſal nature, thou haſt placed us here in a ſtate of diſcipline and exerciſe. Here we are never entirely that which, according to our native tendencies, according to our faculties and capacities we may and ſhould be. But it is thy gracious will that theſe diſpoſitions, theſe faculties, theſe capacities ſhould here be gradually unfolded, formed, brought into action. Here we are in the ſtate of infancy, but by it we are gradually to grow up to maturity. Yes, here thou wouldſt educate us for a ſphere of exertion more extenſive and brilliant, for a better, a ſuperior life, and train us up, by various exerciſes to the occupations and felicities of it. All that we here are and do, that we enjoy and ſuffer, all that happens to us, are ſo many means to this exalted purpoſe. All is calculated to render us more intelligent, wiſer, better, more perfect. In this view haſt thou, wiſely gracious, ſubjected us and all that

is around us to ſo many accidents and viciſſitudes, for our trial and exerciſe. To this end haſt thou ſtrewn our courſe with ſo many difficulties and impediments that call forth every effort, every exertion of our faculties. To this end haſt thou ſo cloſely and ſo variouſly interſperſed light and darkneſs, joys and ſorrows, progreſs and oppoſition, proſperity and adverſity in our preſent ſtate, leading us to our appointment one while on a plain and even path and then by rugged ways. Oh might we ſuffer ourſelves always to be led and directed by thee, our Father, as obedient children! Even then ſubmit to thy guidance, when it is at variance with our inclinations and deſigns, when we are unable to diſcover the end and aim of it! Might we accuſtom ourſelves to look up to thee, who diſpoſeſt of human affairs, not with reverence only, but with confidence and joy. In the moſt diſtreſſing and alarming ſituation, may we ſee thy mercy ſhining through the cloud, and diſcern thy hand conducting us by the various meaſures of thy providence to regions of neverfailing happineſs! Knowing that even thy ſevereſt correction is the correction of a father, of the wiſeſt and tendereſt of fathers; aſſuredly convinced that thy purpoſes can never fail, that thou beſt knoweſt how to complete them, and that thy everlaſting purpoſe is and can be no other than to render us happy! Yes, in this aſſurance we will reſign ourſelves entirely to thee with filial confidence; entirely acquieſce in thee and

thy

thy decrees; and thankfully receive from thy hand as benefactions, good and evil, joys and ſorrows. Oh lead and guide us by thy counſel! Thy counſel is ever wiſe and good. Conducted by thee, we ſhall never go aſtray. Under thy protection and thy guidance we ſhall infallibly reach the mark of our high calling. God, ſtrengthen and confirm us in theſe pious ſentiments, and grant that the meditations we are now about to begin in this view may be bleſſed. Theſe our humble ſupplications we preſent unto thee as the followers of thy ſon Jeſus, who has taught us to know and to love thee as our common parent; and, as believers in that goſpel, which encourages all men to addreſs thee as their God and father, and to hope for thy favour in the practice of truth and righteouſneſs, we conclude them in his words: Our father, &c.

HEBREWS xii. 11.

No chaſtening for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous; nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs unto them which are exerciſed thereby.

GOD loves his creatures of the human race. This all nature proclaims aloud. This is declared by all the capacities and powers that God has given us, all the arrangements he has made in the moral and the phyſical world. Happineſs is our true,

true, our total deſtination; the deſtination of all that exiſts and lives, and is ſuſceptible of happineſs. To this end has he made us; to this end has he aſſigned us this part of his dominion for the place of our abode, and embelliſhed it with ſo many beauties and bleſſings; to this end has he placed us in the various connections wherein we ſtand with the material and the ſpiritual world. He has likewiſe excited in us all a thirſt, an ardent thirſt after happineſs; and how is it poſſible that he, the Allgracious, ſhould have raiſed in us this thirſt, and not have furniſhed us with the means of aſſuaging it! — No, we are ſurrounded on all ſides with ſources of pleaſure and delight, inviting us to enjoyment, no leſs diverſified than exuberant, and which we can never entirely exhauſt, nor each of their ſeveral kinds.

And yet man, this creature ſo beloved of God, and ſo evidently ordained to happineſs, frequently meets with grievous afflictions; and no one yet of all our race has ever paſſed his life without having ſuffered more or leſs. Are then theſe afflictions at ſtrife with our deſtination? Do they exclude us from the path of happineſs? Have they a tendency to defeat the purpoſes of our Creator, the plans of almighty goodneſs? No, that were impoſſible; even theſe afflictions muſt tend to ſomething good, muſt poſſeſs a certain value, muſt contribute to the advancement of our happineſs: otherwiſe God, who loves us with paternal tenderneſs,

derneſs, and would have us happy and joyful as his children, certainly would never allow them to befall us.

And thus the matter ſtands, my dear friends, even afflictions, even tribulations are good; are benefactions of our heavenly Father. They are means, harſh and unpleaſant indeed, but efficacious and ſalutary means, for our purification, for our amendment, our higher perfection. They lead us a rough and dreary way, a way often moiſtened with tears and the ſweat of our brows; but a way that terminates in happineſs. Of this our own reaſon and experience will not permit us to doubt; and the ſacred books confirm what they teach us, in a manner the moſt expreſs. "No chaſtening," ſays the apoſtle in our text, "for the preſent ſeemeth to be joyous, but grievous:" all ſeverity is repugnant and diſagreeable to us while we feel it. "Nevertheleſs, afterward it yieldeth the peaceable fruit of righteouſneſs to them which are exerciſed thereby:" in the ſequel it produces the beſt effects to them who allow themſelves to be corrected by it, by rendering them good and virtuous. "It is good for me," ſays the pſalmiſt, "that I have been afflicted, that I might learn thy ſtatutes." And the apoſtles of Jeſus, in behalf of themſelves and their fellow-chriſtians, glory alſo in tribulations, knowing that "tribulation worketh patience; and patience experience; and experience, hope; and hope maketh not aſhamed." May we then, my devout audience, learn to take

the afflictions and tribulations of our lives, no leſs than the proper goods and ſatisfactions of them, for what they are and ought to be, and employ them to the advancement of our happineſs! My deſign is, by my preſent diſcourſe, to give ſome direction to your reflections upon them. To which purpoſe I ſhall examine with you the value of afflictions and tribulations in regard to human happineſs, and to that end firſt ſhew, how and to what amount afflictions and tribulations have a real value; and then, what gives them that value, wherein it conſiſts, how they have a tendency to further our happineſs.

Afflictions and tribulations have no value as ultimate objects, but only as means. They are not in themſelves either good or wholeſome, but only in regard of their effects. Afflictions are and muſt ever continue to be afflictions; diſagreeable, painful ſenſations. Tribulations are and muſt ever remain tribulations; accidents and occurrences that are adverſe to our nature, and hoſtile to our views and deſires. While they are preſent, ſays our text, we think them unpleaſant and grievous; and this of themſelves they actually are. They are medicines, bitter medicines, which are not preſcribed on account of the pleaſantneſs of their taſte, but only as good againſt diſeaſes, and which probably we muſt be long plagued and tormented with before we are completely recovered. They are exerciſes, not enjoined us on their own account, but for the ſake of their effects. The ſchools conſidered

as ſchools, have no great value. It is not the reſtraints they impoſe on our liberty; it is not the toilſome application they at one time induce and at another compel us to exert; not the chaſtiſement they beſtow on the negligent ſcholar, for his puniſhment and correction, that make them deſirable. It is only the good conſequences of theſe hard reſtraints, of this laborious aſſiduity, of this grievous chaſtening: only the uſeful knowledge, the better diſpoſitions, the good habitudes, we thereby acquire, that confer its whole value on whatever we do and ſuffer there. So alſo ſickneſſes, misfortunes, loſſes of goods and honours, loſſes of patrons and friends, the failure of plans and undertakings, poverty, humiliations, perſecutions, and whatever elſe oppreſſes and afflicts mankind, have only ſo far any real worth, as by their means we become wiſer and better and happier.

Hence it naturally follows ſecondly, that they acquire this value only by the uſe we make of them. Not every man to whom medicine is adminiſtered, or who voluntarily takes it of himſelf, will thereby be healed. There muſt be vital powers yet remaining in him; he muſt not purpoſely hinder and diminiſh the effects of the medicine he has taken; he muſt do or abſtain from many things, which at other times he need not do or abſtain from, and ſo frame his whole conduct as is befitting his preſent condition. Not every one who frequents the ſchools, and allows himſelf to be in-

ſtructed or is forced to be taught, will learn what they are adapted to teach. Many a one will leave them as ignorant and unqualified, probably more corrupted and vicious, than he was before. It is only the attentive, the ſtudious, the obedient ſcholar, who willingly imbibes inſtruction and profits by diſcipline, that returns from them enriched with the treaſures of wiſdom, and bleſſes the man that entered him there. If we would have afflictions and tribulations to be of real value to us; we muſt uſe them aright: we muſt account them juſt what they are; muſt conſider them in their dependency on God and his will; muſt reflect upon them, view them on their moral ſide, attend to the deſign of them, and demean ourſelves in all reſpects according to our ſituation, as it is altered by them.

In ſhort, afflictions and tribulations have often no more than a comparative value, only inaſmuch as they ſnatch us from the dangers of an uninterrupted proſperity, and teach us what that could never inform us of, or lead us to a point of wiſdom and virtue to which proſperity could never conduct us. On this principle, they are not neceſſary to all men in the ſame kind and to the ſame degree. There are children who may be educated by careſſes alone; there are others that require a harſher diſcipline. The former have a tender and ſuſceptible heart; feel the whole value of every kindneſs ſhewn to them; think nobly; and find no duty, no ſacrifice, too painful whereby they may teſtify

teſtify their gratitude to their benefactors, their friends, their tutors and conductors: the latter ſort are obſtinate, headſtrong, ſelfiſh; are far leſs tractable, much harder to be governed, and therefore require to be more forcibly agitated, require to be often ſeverely chaſtiſed, before they can be brought to ſubmiſſion and obedience. So likewiſe there are men of generous and noble ſouls, whom proſperity neither faſcinates nor hardens, neither ſeducing them into folly, nor plunging them in vice; who find, in every benefit they receive from the hand of the Almighty, freſh incitement to juſtice, and freſh impuſe to beneficence; and who, thoroughly impreſſed with the love of God and man, require no other motives to make the beſt, the moſt generally uſeful application of all that they are and have. But poſſibly there may be a much greater proportion of ſuch as know not how to bear uninterrupted ſucceſs, who by it would encounter the riſk of loſing all ſenſe of obligation and virtue, all ſentiment of religion, all the feelings of humanity, and fall by little and little into the moſt abandoned profligacy: and, if theſe perſons are ſnatched from this danger by afflictions and tribulations; if by their means every deadened ſentiment to what is beautiful and good be reſtored to motion; then certainly muſt afflictions and tribulations be to them of far greater value than the moſt flouriſhing proſperity.

And this, my pious hearers, is the true ſtate of the caſe. To convince ourſelves of it, we need only proceed to examine a little more circumſtantially what it is that gives human ſufferings and tribulations this value, or wherein it conſiſts, and how they tend to advance our happineſs.

Afflictions and tribulations are, in the firſt place well adapted to lead a man to ſerious reflections on himſelf, on the true end of his creation, on his condition and the way to happineſs, to imprint thoſe reflections on his mind, and actually to ſet him forward on that way. How rarely are theſe reflections made amidſt the captivating ſplendour, amidſt the confuſed noiſe, the dizzineſs, the deluſive glare, the intoxication, that commonly attend on proſperity! How ſeldom there can ſerious thoughts obtain a hearing! How quickly are they ſcared away by the oſtentation of the luxurious, the ſtrife of tongues, the impertinences of the idle, the lies of the vain, the ſcandal of the malicious, the ſlanders of the defamer, the voice of the flatterer, and all that world of iniquity, which proceeds from the tongue! How ſeldom there does a man deſcend into himſelf! Delighting to wander abroad, and familiar everywhere, how apt is he to be a ſtranger at home, a ſtranger to his own character, a ſtranger to his own heart, a ſtranger to all that it is important for a rational creature to know. How eaſily does he overlook and forget all his inward defects, all his ſpiritual wants, in the poſſeſſion

poſſeſſion and enjoyment of ſo many outward advantages! How apt is he there to exchange reality for appearances, to confound what he is with what he has, and to loſe ſight of himſelf and his proper felicity amidſt the enchanting viſions that float upon his mind! — But, when the ſcene changes; when all theſe ſhining images diſappear from his view; when the companionable buffoon, the ſcoffer, the ſycophant, the falſe friend, forſake his unhappy houſe; when all is huſh and quiet around him, and all things awe him into ſolemn gravity: then he ſtands ſtill, awakes from his dream, grows attentive to himſelf, diſcovers the emptineſs of his heart, and the inſtability of fortune; and what is more natural than for him to enter upon theſe or ſimilar conſiderations: What is it then properly that is ſo much altered within me, or of me, or about me? Is it myſelf, or is it the objects around? Do they eſſentially belong to me, or do they only ſtand in a certain relation to me for a period of time? Does my whole, does my principal happineſs conſiſt indeed in them? Is the loſs of them utterly irreparable? The riches I poſſeſſed, were they myſelf? Were the honours and the magnificence that ſurrounded me, were they me? My ruined health, was that myſelf? Am I not juſt what I was yeſterday and the day before? Juſt as ſenſible, or juſt as ſenſeleſs, juſt as good, or juſt as bad, as heretofore? And what is, now, the purport of my exiſtence? Am I here that I may be

rich and great, that I may ſhine and glitter among my brethren, that I may gratify all my ſenſual deſires, that I may fare ſumptuouſly and live joyouſly every day? That does not depend upon me, that is ſubject to a thouſand accidents! That neither can all men be and do! That neither can any be and do ſo long as they could wiſh! Would providence have permitted all theſe things to be liable to ſo many revolutions and changes, if they were our ſovereign good, if we were to fulfil the deſign of our being on earth by the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of them? No, that muſt be attainable in every ſtation; it muſt be within the reach of the poor as well as the rich, of the low as well as the high, of the ſick as well as the healthy, of the unfortunate as well as the proſperous; it muſt therefore conſiſt in more eſſential, more permanent things. And muſt not wiſdom and virtue, muſt not ſpiritual perfection, be this ſovereign good? They are indeed intimately and inſeparably connected with myſelf, with me. Of them no misfortune can rob me! They neceſſarily adhere neither to riches nor to poverty; neither to inferior nor to ſuperior ſtation, neither to health nor ſickneſs! Theſe I may poſſeſs, enjoy, and infinitely augment, in the humbleſt obſcurity as well as in the glare of a court, in a cottage as well as in a palace, in ſolitude as well as in the moſt numerous and brilliant aſſemblies! They can render me inwardly tranquil, contented, happy, in every condition! Even death itſelf cannot deſpoil

ſpoil me of them! I take them with me into the grave and into the future world! And can I then purchaſe them at too dear a rate? Can that be detrimental to me, can that be a misfortune which makes me a ſharer in thoſe goods, or which allows me to enjoy them more, and to a larger extent? — If then tribulations, my pious heaters, rouze and lead a perſon to ſuch reflections, to ſuch conſiderations, to ſuch concluſions, what a value muſt they be of to him!

Afflictions and tribulations teach us, farther, to form juſter eſtimates of worldly endowments, and to moderate our avidity and our affection for them. How many a perſon, whoſe heart was entirely wrapped up in theſe objects, who was the ſlave of them, who knew no happineſs but what they procured or promiſed him, has learnt in this ſchool to eſteem them as what they actually are! Yes, when, confined by pain and ſickneſs, he could no longer enjoy them; when trouble and anxiety rendered them inſipid; when he ſuffered under the loſs of them; when ſome reverſe of circumſtances has ſhaken the proud edifice of his fortune, and threatened him with its fall; when death has raviſhed from him his patron or the beloved of his heart: then the ſcales fall off from his eyes; he then intimately feels how much theſe goods were tranſitory and worthleſs, how incapable they are to render a man wholly and conſtantly happy, and how inadequate to the vehement efforts that are made to procure them. Now the

the glare of external objects diſappears. Now the chains that bound him to the world are broken. Now he truſts no longer to the ſupport of a frail reed, as though he leaned againſt a rock. Now he depends no more upon goods that were only lent him, as if they were his inamiſſible property; confides no more in diſtinctions that every accident may annul, in ſtrength that may ſo ſuddenly be loſt, in men that may die to-day, in a life that is ſo ſhort and precarious. And, ſince his avidity for happineſs ſtill remains equally keen, equally inſatiable; he therefore directs it towards other goods, that are more durable, and more worthy of his endeavours. Now he learns to prefer internals to externals, wiſdom and virtue to honours and wealth, intellectual joys to ſenſual pleaſures, the unſeen to the viſible, the creator to the creature. And how greatly muſt he thus be the gainer! How much ſeldomer now does he exert his faculties in vain! How much more rarely do his hopes and expectations fail him! How much firmer is his welfare fixt! And muſt not the tribulations which have helped him to this ſituation, be of great value to him?

In like manner afflictions and tribulations very frequently teach us temperance, ſelf-government, and the art of diſpenſing with many things. To this we are firſt urged by dire neceſſity. We cannot, we ſhould not any longer do particular things, any longer lead a particular kind of life, any longer partake of certain amuſements. We have loſt the means and the right to them. We muſt

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now ſubmit to certain reſtrictions. By degrees we become uſed to them; they grow eaſy, agreeable to us; we find many conſiderable advantages in them. Now we act from inclination, from principle; we now feel ourſelves more free, more independent on outward things; find ourſelves leſs affected by the inconſtancy, and leſs liable to the ſtrokes of fortune; learn to endure quiet, to eſteem privacy, to love and profit by retirement, and by all theſe things become better and more accompliſhed. What numbers have for the firſt time learnt to govern themſelves, and to underſtand and enjoy true freedom in theſe ſchools of tribulation! What numbers have been ſnatched, indeed againſt their will, but to their real happineſs, from a perpetual round of frivolous amuſements, where they could never be in a proper frame of mind, never be elated in their lives with full conſciouſneſs, never as rational beings, where they were the lamentable ſport of their own paſſions and the paſſions of others! How many have there been taught to ſubdue thoſe luſts, in the ſervice of which they were formerly forced to drudge like ſlaves, and to deprive themſelves of a thouſand things, and to forego them without uneaſineſs, which till now were to them urgent wants! They are now, in ſeveral reſpects, more circumſcribed, but on the whole, more free; are left more alone, but are more ſatisfied with themſelves, and happier in the ſilent enjoyment of their own hearts.

Afflictions

Afflictions and tribulations are fourthly very often a ſchool of humanity, and the milder virtues of ſocial life; and what a value muſt this alſo confer upon them! But too frequently does uninterrupted ſucceſs render us obdurate, inſenſible, unfeeling to the neceſſities of others. The proſperous man can ſeldom form to himſelf a juſt repreſentation of the miſeries of the diſtreſſed; his ſtation, his affairs, his companies, keep him commonly far aloof from the ſight of them. The healthy and robuſt very frequently imagine the complaints of pain and diſeaſe to be exaggerated or affected, have had no ſimilar ſenſations, and if they do not abſolutely diſpute thoſe of others, yet their ſtrong nervous ſyſtem is but little moved at the recital of them. He with whom all things ſucceed, is but too apt to blame another, who laments over defeated plans, thwarted expectations, or fruſtrated labours and attempts, and to charge him with imprudence and bad management. And how much muſt this attenuate his compaſſion! — But the man that has ſuffered himſelf, my dear friends, oh he feels the ſorrows of his brother in a different way; he ſmarts at the very ſight of the ſufferer of pain, he mingles his tears with the tears of the mourner, he feels every ſtroke that falls on another, as if he were ſmitten himſelf. Every ſcar his paſt ſufferings have left upon his heart pains him afreſh, and gives him ſo quick a ſenſe of the ſufferings of another, as will certainly not leave him either indifferent or inactive. He who

who has himſelf borne the weight of misfortune, feels alſo how hard it preſſes when he hears another groan beneath it, and finds within him the ſtrongeſt impulſe to alleviate that burden, if he cannot totally remove it. He who has himſelf experienced how eaſily the wiſeſt plans may be fruſtrated, how often the beſt undertakings fail, how often ſwiftneſs will not ſucceed in the race, nor ſtrength in the conflict, nor prudence in buſineſs, how much in all theſe reſpects depends on fortune and propitious circumſtances, he will certainly deem otherwiſe of him who actually ſuffers under theſe trials, will judge him with much more lenity, not condemn him with ſeverity, not impute his misfortune to him as a crime, and not ſhut up his bowels of compaſſion from him. He who has himſelf experienced how ſweet the participations, the comfort, the aſſiſtances of a friend are in diſtreſs; how the heart is thus relieved, the proſpect cleared up, the hopes revived, when a man can pour out his ſorrows into the boſom of another, when he feels that he is not abandoned by all men, that he is not left to ſuffer alone, and may venture to aſſure himſelf of a guide and ſupport even along the ruggedeſt path of life: whoever has made trial of this, oh how will he run to open his heart to the ſufferings of his friend and his brother, to give him a vent for his ſorrows, to receive his complaints, and to dry up his tears; how eagerly will he do all that in him lies to throw ſome light upon his darkneſs, and to conſole and revive him! And how gentle,

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how complacent, how ſerviceable, how humane, how beneficent, muſt theſe experiences and ſenſations render him in general to all mankind!

Afflictions and tribulations are often a ſchool of many other virtues, and particularly of the pureſt devotion. How can we better learn reſignation, abſolute, unlimited ſubmiſſion to the will of God, than when his will is in oppoſition to our own, and he demands of us the ſacrifice of ſuch things as had the whole attachment of our heart; and yet we ſubmit to his will, and acknowledge his will to be right and expedient and unblameable; and yet without heſitation make him theſe ſacrifices, coſt as dear as they will, and ſay to him in ſentiments of the moſt perfect ſincerity: "Father, not as I will, but as thou wilt: Father, thy will be done!" How can we more ſtrongly teſtify our confidence in his ſovereign wiſdom and goodneſs, how ſhew our filial and entire acquieſcence in all his appointments and diſpenſations, how our conviction that his thoughts and ways are far, far exalted above our thoughts and ways, and are infinitely better and more perfect than ours; than when, even in the midſt of miſfortunes, we adore him as the Allwiſe and the Allbountiful, accept without repinings whatever he ordains, or permits, or does, and compoſe our minds by reflections on his ſuperintendency, that he has nothing but perfection and felicity in view, and that his purpoſes can never fail! How can we exerciſe ourſelves more in faith towards the Almighty,

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than when we hold it faſt and will not let it go, even when reduced to the depth of diſtreſs, even then believe and hope, though we do not ſee, though all about us is darkneſs, though we ſeem to be forſaken by all, and everything threatens us with perdition and ruin? And if we are thus exerciſed and ſtrengthened, by ſufferings and tribulations, in reſignation to the will of God, in confidence in him, in ſatisfaction with his ways; if, by their means, we learn the hardeſt, but at the ſame time the nobleſt kind of obedience, the rareſt but the pureſt filial devotion; muſt not this evidently promote our inward goodneſs and perfection? Muſt it not approximate us to the deity, and qualify us more for his complacency and for the tokens of his favour? Muſt it not prepare an ample recompenſe for our fidelity in a better world? And muſt not this give a great value to thoſe afflictions and tribulations?

Yet more. How momentous, how dear to a man muſt afflictions and tribulations render the doctrines and comforts of religion! Religion, to which he formerly perhaps paid little regard, probably reſtricted it to certain opinions, or ceremonies and practices, which he but too often thought he could very well diſpenſe with, or which only preſented itſelf to him under a gloomy and uninviting form, and which he never underſtood as the friend, the guide, the comforter of the human race! When we are afflicted, what is more natural than to look out for help? And how ſeldom with any certitude

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can we expect it from men! How much ſeldomer do we actually obtain it from that quarter! And to whom then ſhall we apply for it but to him who alone can conſtantly and certainly afford aſſiſtance, and does moſt readily grant it? Yes, Lord, when tribulation comes upon us, then do we turn ourſelves to thee! Then does the ſentiment of an almighty, an allwiſe, an allgracious ruler of the world, a father in heaven, which had probably long lain dormant in the ſoul, again revive; then the appetites and affections once more take their natural direction; they turn to their creator and preſerver, to the eternal fount of being and benignity, to him in whom we live and move and are! Now has the troubled ſpirit, the ſoul toſſed to and fro upon the billows of adverſity, once more found a fixed point, to which ſhe may adhere, from whence ſhe may proceed, and to which ſhe may return, a ſupport on which ſhe can rely, a ſource of comfort from which ſhe may draw refreſhment. How differently does ſhe now feel her dependance on the ſovereign being, and the intimate and bleſſed relation that ſubſiſts between the creature and the creator! She is now no more forſaken, no longer forcibly torn and ſevered from her former connections, no more a ſolitary exiſtence in the land of the living! She has now the Lord alway before her, and knows and feels that ſhe walks in his ſight, and is protected by his arm, that ſhe lives in his kingdom, is one of his children and ſubjects, and is allied in the moſt vari-

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ous and intimate manner with the viſible and the inviſible, the material and the ſpiritual world, by him who comprehends and unites all things in himſelf. In what an altered light muſt ſhe now view the doctrine of an all-diſpoſing Providence and the government of the Higheſt! What comfort muſt ſhe be inſpired with, which ſhe never taſted before! She now no longer appears to be the ſport of chance and the creature of fortune; no more complains in ſullen murmurs of the injuſtice ſhe has undergone; is no longer tormented by rage and rancour againſt the proximate cauſes of her ſufferings; no longer haraſſed in contriving plans and deviſing means of requiting evil with evil. No, it is the Lord's doing; all things are under his ſupreme controul; he diſtributes both proſperity and adverſity, riches and poverty, health and ſickneſs, life and death, according to his good pleaſure, amongſt the children of men; he elevates and he depreſſes, he wounds and heals, he bringeth down to the grave and bringeth up from it again, and what he diſpoſes and does muſt neceſſarily be right and expedient, muſt, ſooner or later, in this way or in that, turn to my intereſt, and to the intereſt of his whole family on earth! And this, my dear friends, this is ſoothing to the ſoul; a healing balm to the wounded heart! The weary traveller has now got a ſhelter from the ſtorm. He has found a ſanctuary in the time of trouble, and he looks to the heavens, from whence cometh his aid. The heart is fully at eaſe while it

reſts on him that made it, and repoſes with perfect peace under the protection of everlaſting arms. This gives all our ſufferings a quite different, a much leſs frightful aſpect!

And how important, how precious to the afflicted ſufferer muſt be the doctrine of our immortality, of the future and better life! When he ſo acutely feels the emptineſs and inſufficiency of the preſent, with all its goods and advantages and joys; when ſo many ties that bound him to it are diſſolved or relaxed; when the part of his road that ſtill lies before him is loſt in obſcurity and darkneſs; when he meets with ſo many ſtumbling-blocks, ſo many incumbrances and difficulties in it: how reviving muſt be the proſpect into a ſuperior and a better life! As reviving, as when the weary, way-worn, perſecuted traveller, deſcries from afar the term of his pilgrimage, the ſpires of his native land. And with how much greater eaſe, with how much greater fortitude, will he now bear the troubles of life! How much more ſtrenuouſly and cheerfully will he now complete his courſe, when he runs, not as uncertainly, but expects at the end of it the richeſt recompenſe for all, the glorious reward of his faith and perſeverance! Oh what a value muſt religion hence acquire in his ſight! And what a value muſt afflictions and tribulations have, which diſcovered to him the excellency of it, and cauſed him to apply to its conſolations!

Afflictions and tribulations are laſtly oftentimes the moſt efficacious means of ſtimulating mankind in general to a total change in their minds and manners. What all the arguments of reaſon and religion, what all the bounties of God, what all the remonſtrances and exhortations and intreaties of teachers and friends, what neither the ſtill, ſmall voice of conſcience, nor its louder alarms and reproaches could ever effect; has often been done by afflictions and tribulations. The former not unfrequently ſlide over the heart of the thoughtleſs and hardened offender, like water over the ſmooth ſurface of a rock, and leave no trace behind. The latter ſtartle and arreſt the inconſiderate wretch that is ruſhing headlong on deſtruction; they forcibly and ſuddenly ſtop him in his wicked career; they ſtrike more deeply into the receſſes of his heart; they withdraw, efface and diſſipate, like duſt before the wind, all the airy forms of happineſs that floated in his mind and deluded his hopes; and will permit him no longer to doubt that he is not what he took himſelf for, that he has not what he thought he had, that he is unhappy and wretched. His ſeducers forſake him, or laugh at his diſtreſs; his flatterers are ſilent, and take themſelves away; the ſnares that ſurround him ſtand expoſed to his view; the precipice he was approaching ſtrikes him dumb with amazement. He ſtands petrified with horror; the intellectual eye turns inward; he muſt bethink himſelf, muſt retreat, muſt ſeek other comforts, other

pleaſures, other friends, muſt find out ſome other way to happineſs. No longer dazzled and deceived by the glare of outward objects, he is and ſees himſelf full of defects and failings, ſees himſelf all diſorder and confuſion. And now, when reduced to this condition, with ſuch experiences and feelings, if he hear the voice of religion, if her calls to amendment ſtrike upon his mind, encouragement and inſtruction enter; if the good providence of God ſupply him with ſome peculiar aſſiſtance, commiſſion to him ſome meſſenger of peace, ſend to him ſome hearty and honeſt friend: how much more diſpoſed muſt he be to liſten to that voice, to follow that call, and to employ theſe means to his amendment! — I will not however pretend, that afflictions and tribulations do always, that they very often, produce ſuch effects in vicious men. They frequently exaſperate, frequently harden, frequently pervert them ſtill more. Yet many have got the rudiments of reflection and amendment in this ſchool. Many have here received the firſt impulſe, many have conceived the firſt reſolves, have made the firſt ſteps of their return to the path of duty and virtue. Many have been forced to exclaim with the pſalmiſt: It is good for me that I have been afflicted. Before I was afflicted I went wrong, but now have I learnt thy judgments. I thank thee, o God of my life, for having humbled me by ſufferings, for having thus mortified my vanity, taught me to tame my violent paſſions, brought me to a lively ſenſe of my weakneſs

neſs and imbecility, and inſtructed me to keep thy ſtatutes.

Thus, my pious hearers, chaſtening is productive of ſalutary effects in them that are exerciſed thereby, by rendering them virtuous and good. Thus therefore even afflictions and tribulations are of real and often of very great value. Thus are they the benefactions of providence, and ſources of happineſs. If ſtorms and tempeſts in the natural world drive peſtilent diſeaſes away from our dwellings, and bring life and health and fertility with them; ſo likewiſe may the blaſts of misfortune in the moral world rouze the ſupine from their dangerous ſlumber, drive away miſts and vapours from the eyes, awaken the torpid to new powers and action, ſharpen the dull feelings of the palſied ſinner, and reſtore to life the ſpiritually dead. Fear not, o man, who ſtruggleſt under the adverſities of life, I bring you good tidings of great joy; the afflictions which thou endureſt are not the ſtripes of a hard maſter, who ſeeks thy deſtruction; they are the chaſtiſements of a kind father, who puniſhes only to reform. The God of love has no pleaſure in the miſery, or in the death of his creatures. His eye overflows with pity, while his hand is lifted up to ſtrike. Whilſt he bruiſes, he binds up the wound. This ſurely will adminiſter conſolations to the wounded in mind, and ſpeak peace to the broken in heart when they reflect that the evils in their lot are a part of his providence, who does not willingly afflict, nor

grieve the children of men; that they are not marks of his wrath, but indications of his love. Far be it then from us to let ſufferings and tribulations ſlacken our confidence in the unalterable and never-failing goodneſs of our Father in heaven! No, even they are effects and proofs of it. No, with filial reverence will we accept the cup of ſorrow from his parental hand, and never doubt, even whilſt drinking its bitterneſs to the very dregs, that it is wholeſome medicine, by which he reſtores us to health and life.

SERMON XXXIX.

The Value of a good Reputation.

GOD, the everflowing fountain of all our bleſſings, who art the father and benefactor of us all; who haſt given us and ſtill art ever giving us, poor and mean as we are of our ourſelves, ſo many proofs of thy peculiar eſteem and providence, intimating thereby that we ſhould likewiſe mutually eſteem, cordially love, and reciprocally promote, as far as in us lies, the happineſs of each other, as thy children, as members of one family. To this end haſt thou ſo intimately connected us together; made us all in ſo many reſpects dependent on each other, and planted in our hearts ſo powerful an impulſe to ſympathy and benevolence. How kind and righteous is thy will, o God, and how happy were it for us, if we conſtantly fulfilled it with pleaſure and fidelity! Forgive us, merciful Father, that we ſo frequently behave as diſobedient children towards thee, and as foes to each other. Teach us better to underſtand our ſocial connections and intereſts,

and more ſtrictly to anſwer the obligations of juſtice, of equity, of charity. Repleniſh us with a ſincere eſteem for whatever our brethren may poſſeſs of good and excellent; and grant that we may never be miſled by levity, by envy, by hatred, by vanity, to ſpeak or to do anything that might diſturb them in the poſſeſſion of the gifts and endowments beſtowed on them by thee, or might injure and offend them in any other reſpect. Bleſs to this end the meditations we are now about to begin. Cauſe us to be ſo convinced of the value of our neighbour's good reputation, that we may henceforth make it to us an inviolable law never purpoſely to injure it in any manner whatever. This we implore of thee as the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed lord and ſaviour, humbly concluding our petitions in his name and words: Our father, &c.

PROVERBS, xxii. 1.

A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches, and loving favour rather than ſilver or gold.

VERY often it happens that we are negligent and careleſs about matters of great importance, only becauſe we are ignorant of their value, or not ſufficiently attentive to it; or becauſe we conceive not the privation of them to be ſo prejudicial and irreparable

reparable as it really is. This is but too frequently the caſe in regard to the time allotted us to paſs on earth. It is not believed or conſidered to be deſtined to affairs, on the ſucceſsful tranſacting whereof, not only our welfare in this world depends, but likewiſe our condition in that which is to come. It is not believed or conſidered, that this precious time is very liable to be loſt, that loſt time can never be recalled, and that the benefits which we ſuffer to eſcape us by the waſte or the abuſe of it can by no means be compenſated. It is not believed or conſidered, that each day, each hour of life, when regarded in its connection with futurity, is of the utmoſt importance, that it may frequently be deciſive. Hence it is that moſt men are ſo prodigal of their time; hence ſo great a part of it is trifled away either in doing nothing, or in childiſh amuſements; hence it is that concerns of the greateſt moment are ſo much neglected; hence it is that one day is ſuffered to paſs after another, one month after another, one year after another, before we ſeriouſly ſet about our amendment and our everlaſting ſalvation.

Juſt as we deal with our time, my pious hearers, ſo do we not unfrequently act by the good name of our neighbour. It not often happens, it happens indeed but rarely, that we ſay and do ſuch things as are prejudicial to our neighbour's fame from ſheer malice and a deſire to hurt. But it is not believed or conſidered that ſo much depends upon it; that it is ſo eaſily injured or loſt, and that this damage

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can ſo ſeldom be retrieved or repaired. It is not believed or conſidered, that thereby not only the well-being and comfort of the individual againſt whom the offence is committed are diſturbed, but even the good of the whole ſociety is injured in various ways. Hence it is, that we ſo often give full ſcope to the tongue in judging of our neighbour; ſo often ſacrifice veracity to wit, and chriſtian affection and forbearance to the deſire of pleaſing; ſo often utter injurious or ambiguous expreſſions of others, without being thoroughly aware of it, or making ourſelves the ſlighteſt reproaches. This being the caſe, my friends, there can be no better means of attacking this failing, and of rendering us more circumſpect on that head, than by attentively viewing the matter in queſtion, and thus to excite in our ſouls a deep ſenſe of its importance. This is the ſcope and deſign of my preſent diſcourſe.

I ſhall ſhew you the great value of a good reputation, and remind you of the obligations we are under in this reſpect both to ourſelves and to our neighbour. This conſideration will, I doubt not, fully convince you of the truth of Solomon's expreſſion in our text: "A good name is rather to be choſen than great riches, and loving favour rather than ſilver or gold."

By the reputation or good name of a man, I underſtand the general conſideration wherein he ſtands with all thoſe that know him perſonally or from the report of others; and this conſideration is grounded

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on the good opinion the public has of his underſtanding, of his integrity, of his temper and manners, of his ſkill in certain buſineſſes, arts and ſciences, or ariſes from other accompliſhments and merits attributed to him. On this good character, I ſay, extremely much depends; it is of very great value; for by it we are rendered much happier, much more generally uſeful, and not unfrequently morally better, than we ſhould or could be without it.

Our good name, in the firſt place, promotes our happineſs, eſpecially, ſo far as it depends on our outward welfare. To this happineſs thouſands of perſons muſt contribute their ſhare. It is a large and ſpacious edifice, that we indeed muſt plan ourſelves, muſt lay the foundation of, to the carrying on and conſolidation whereof we muſt conſtantly labour; but can neither bring to any conſiderable degree of perfection without the aſſiſtance of others, nor properly maintain it when finiſhed. One while we are in want of the ſagacity and advice, then of the greater abilities and force, now of the aſſiſtance and ſupport, then of the encouragement of our fellowbeings, for attaining our object, for ſucceſsfully proſecuting our affairs and undertakings, for quietly enjoying our privileges and endowments, or for ſoothing our minds under adverſe events.

But is it expedient that our fellow-creatures ſhould ſerve us with their ſagacity and advice; employ their abilities and force for our intereſt; aſſiſt, ſupport,

ſupport, and encourage us: they will require a ſtronger motive to it than mere ſelf-intereſt can give them. Thoſe advantages are not always; they are but ſeldom; and ſome of them are never to be purchaſed. They are the fruit of the eſteem and the benevolence with which our brethren are affected towards us; and this eſteem, this benevolence, is founded on the good opinion they entertain of us. In proportion as this good opinion is contravened and leſſened, as ſuſpicion or diſeſteem take place; in the ſame proportion will the readineſs of their endeavours to promote our happineſs be diminiſhed, and their benevolence and obliging carriage towards us will change into coldneſs and indifference. — — Only put the queſtion to yourſelves, my friends: why do you ſo readily, why is it ſo agreeable to you to afford all poſſible ſervice to certain perſons; and why do you find it ſo unpleaſant, why does it coſt you much conſtraint and ſelf-denial, to do for others anything beyond what the ſtricteſt juſtice requires? Does it not principally proceed from your having a good opinion of the former, and a bad opinion of the latter; that you eſteem the one, and deſpiſe the other? How readily do we communicate our intelligence and our beſt advice to him whom we account a ſenſible and an honeſt man, that knows how to value and to uſe good counſel! How cheerfully do we lend a part of our conſequence or our property to the perſon on whoſe ſincerity and uprightneſs we can ſafely rely! How willingly do we

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afford effectual countenance and ſupport to thoſe whom we believe to have no other than lawful intentions and projects, and would be ready, in ſimilar caſes to afford the ſame countenance and ſupport to us! How heartily do we comfort him whoſe misfortunes cannot be imputed to his own faulty conduct, but to unavoidable and unaccountable events, and whom we could ſincerely wiſh to have been ſucceſsful, for the ſake of his good qualities and deſerts! On the other hand, who would offer advice to the fool, or open himſelf to the crafty? Who would truſt his property or his intereſt to the notorious cheat? Who would readily afford countenance and ſupport to the malignant or the ungrateful? Who would endeavour to comfort the wilful offender? As certainly therefore as a great part of our happineſs or of our outward welfare depends on the behaviour of our fellow-creatures towards us; ſo certainly is their behaviour towards us determined by the good or the bad repute in which we ſtand with them.

This is not all. We are deſigned for ſocial life, for intercourſe with other perſons, for participation in our reciprocal joys and ſatisfactions. Apart from all our rational fellow-creatures, excluded from their ſocieties and pleaſures, left alone to ourſelves and our ſolitary reflections and feelings, we could either not be happy at all, or not in ſo high a degree. The genial ſentiment of benevolence and friendſhip, that pure and abundant ſource of pleaſure, would

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ſoon be extinct, for want of a ſupply; and the oppoſite ſenſations of ſpleen, of vexation, of miſanthropy, would ſucceed in its place. But in order that ſocial life ſhould have charms for us; that our commerce with others ſhould be agreeable, that they may take an intereſt in what befalls us, and admit us to a ſhare in their joys and their pleaſures; we muſt ſtand in good repute with them. They muſt aſcribe to us ſuch qualities or diſpoſitions as are of ſome value in their eyes, that render us not unworthy of their friendſhip and converſe. At leaſt, they muſt not be able to charge us with anything, they muſt not believe us to be capable of anything that merits contempt or abhorrence.

A natural and unaffected behaviour, a free and eaſy communication of our ſentiments and feelings; a frank but inoffenſive opinion of what we ſee and hear, of what is ſaid and done; a mutually earneſt, but not a ſtudied and anxious endeavour to be agreeable: are undoubtedly the real delights of ſocial life, the greateſt charms of friendly intercourſe. But can theſe ſubſiſt where the members of the ſociety are not connected by reciprocal eſteem? Will any one, who, whether by his own fault or not, ſtands in bad repute among the reſt, be admitted to the enjoyment of theſe ſatisfactions? Will not people ſhun the converſation of one that lies under the imputation of a weak underſtanding or a wicked heart, who is reckoned a hypocrite, or a ſlanderer, or a harſh and ſarcaſtic cenſor, or a ſower of diſcord, or to whoſe charge any other bad diſpoſitions or

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actions are laid? And if we cannot abſolutely avoid his company on account of our circumſtances and ſituation, can it be imagined that we ſhall take much pains to promote his ſatisfaction? Will people do juſtice to his character, his opinions, and his conduct? Will people ſhew themſelves to him in their natural colours, and by that means furniſh him with opportunity and encouragement to do ſo too? Will they not rather interpret his moſt indifferent geſtures, his moſt harmleſs words and actions, nay his moſt inſignificant looks, by the prepoſſeſſions they have imbibed againſt him? Will not his acquaintance be either utterly cold and reſerved towards him, or, by a forced regard and friendſhip, rather confound than comfort him? Certainly, let a man have what eminent capacities and endowments of mind, what good qualities, what great merits ſoever; but let malice or levity ſpread injurious reports about him, reports which poſſeſs a certain degree of credibility; and he will ſoon be deprived of the beſt part of the ſocial ſatisfactions and pleaſures which his talents, his qualities, his deſerts, gave him great right to expect: he will probably ſoon be reduced to live entirely alone, or at leaſt to confine his converſation to the perſons dependent upon him; and how greatly muſt this impair his happineſs, how many ſources of it muſt it exclude him from enjoying! While to him on the other hand, who is in poſſeſſion of a good reputation, all theſe ſources of pleaſure and delight ſtand open;

and he may even with far leſs talents and merits, with far greater failings and infirmities, than the other has, derive from them various kinds of ſatisfaction and happineſs. So certain is it that a good name is preferable to wealth, and favour to ſilver or gold.

But, as a good reputation contributes greatly to our happineſs, inaſmuch as our outward welfare and our intercourſe with others depend upon it, ſo ſhall we thereby become more generally uſeful than we otherwiſe could be, and may contribute much more to the happineſs of others, than we otherwiſe could do; and this in various ways.

For being uſeful to ſociety, it is not enough that we poſſeſs certain capacities and ſkill in many reſpects; that we are maſters of particular arts or ſciences, or certain kinds of trade and commerce; that we execute with induſtry and punctuality the concerns intruſted to us; but others muſt likewiſe believe and know that we have theſe capacities and aptitudes, that we underſtand theſe matters, and that we may ſafely be truſted with them. And, as generally ſpeaking we are not the only perſons who can render theſe or other ſervices to ſociety, mankind muſt be induced to accept them at our hands; and to this end they muſt aſcribe to us ſuch qualities and diſtinctive merits as may attract their regard and conciliate their eſteem for us. At leaſt we muſt not have a bad or doubtful character in the eye of the public, and our conduct muſt be irreproachable,

irreproachable, if our ſervices are to be preferred to thoſe of others. We muſt therefore have a good name among our fellow-creatures; they muſt have a good opinion of us.

Of what ſervice, in this reſpect, is wiſdom to the wiſe, to the ſcholar his learning, to the patriot his vigilant and generous zeal for the common welfare, if men will not elect them to ſuch offices, and place them in ſuch ſtations, as may enable them to ſhew their wiſdom, their learning, their patriotic diſpoſitions, and apply them to purpoſes of importance? But will men ordinarily confer theſe offices and poſts upon them, if they entertain a mean opinion of them; if they take the wiſe man for an obſtinate, fantaſtical fellow, the ſcholar for a croſs-grained, upſtart pedant, the patriot for a ſelf-intereſted or ambitious pretender; or though they ſhould indeed allow their eminent qualities, yet at the ſame time ſhould charge them with any ſuch blemiſhes in their character as ſhould entirely eclipſe their luſtre?

The caſe is exactly the ſame with the artiſt, with the artificer, with the merchant, with the lawyer, and every one elſe. That the artiſt or the mechanic may exert himſelf in his art or profeſſion; that he may acquire a certain degree of perfection in it, and ſo render himſelf truly uſeful to ſociety: he muſt have much work of art or induſtry to execute; and this will not be given him, unleſs they who are to employ him have a good opinion of his

talents or his ſkill, or a regard for him on account of his perſonal and moral qualities. That the merchant may tranſact his buſineſs with ſucceſs; that, by an extenſive and gainful commerce, he may promote the welfare of his countrymen, and of human ſociety in general: he muſt be taken, both at home and abroad, for an intelligent, ſagacious, active, upright man; he muſt be thought to underſtand his buſineſs well, and to tranſact it with punctuality and caution; and in the degree that this belief is weakened or diminiſhed, to the ſame degree will his activity for the general advantage be reduced, and his influence on the whole be leſſened. That laſtly the lawyer may be really uſeful by his knowledge of the laws of the land, and of the manner of proceeding in litigations, or even by his eloquence: he ſhould ſtand, with the parties as well as with the bench, in the reputation of a well-informed, ſagacious, judicious man, as a friend to truth and juſtice, as a foe to all ſiniſter evaſions, every ſpecies of ſubterfuge and corruption; and the more general and unqueſtioned this reputation is, the more is he in a capacity, by diſcreet diſſuaſions from hazardous ſuits, or by friendly accommodations of controverſies already begun, or by a reſolute proſecution of right, to contribute to the common intereſt. In ſhort, without the help of a good reputation, no man will eaſily find opportunity to afford conſiderable ſervice to ſociety; and by the loſs of it, all the capacities

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and means a man may poſſeſs to that end will generally be rendered uſeleſs.

Still more. Though by means of the place we hold, or the office we fill in ſociety, we have frequent occaſions of applying our talents to the general welfare; yet we ſhall ſeldom be able to do ſo with ſucceſs, unleſs we bear a good reputation. The purity of our intentions will always be doubted; our beſt propoſals will be rejected. Our moſt public-ſpirited endeavours will fail, for want of countenance and ſupport, or will even be aſſailed by violent and obſtinate oppoſition. We ſhall very frequently exert our abilities and faculties in vain, and always, even with the moſt ſincere application of them, effect comparatively but little. Whereas the better the opinion mankind entertain of us; the more confidence they repoſe in our ſkill and integrity: with ſo much better ſucceſs ſhall we do what we ought in virtue of our office and profeſſion; the fewer obſtacles and difficulties ſhall we meet with in the execution of our good deſigns, or in the proſecution of ſalutary projects. Good men will ſupport and encourage us in them according to their means; and bad men will not eaſily venture to commence hoſtilities againſt us

Of how great importance in this reſpect, for example, is the good fame of a prince, a ſtateſman, a magiſtrate! As long as the ruler or the perſons entruſted with the public adminiſtration are reputed to be the wiſe and good fathers of the people; as

long as the public aſcribe eminent abilities and virtues to them; as long as they are generally thought to be honeſt and faithful: ſo long will it be eaſy for them to govern the ſubjects according to their pleaſure; to ſtamp validity and authority on their laws and ordinances; to accompliſh their aims without oppoſition; and to unite, if not all, yet the majority of the members of the ſtate, in the proſecution of them. But do men once begin to doubt of their abilities, or of their ſteadineſs and integrity, and theſe doubts become general; do men once charge them with ſelf-intereſtedneſs, or tyrannical diſpoſitions, or even indifferency to the public weal: they will find but little ſupport, but will meet with much oppoſition; even though they are honeſtly doing their duty, and labouring for the proſperity of their country. Mankind will not truſt to their moſt expreſs declarations and aſſertions; will find fault with their wiſeſt meaſures; deſpiſe and tranſgreſs their moſt ſalutary laws; murmur at their moſt reaſonable demands; and pay them no other than a forced, and of conſequence a very imperfect and defective obedience.

How much in this reſpect, depends on the repute wherein a public teacher of religion ſtands with his auditory! Do they doubt of his integrity; do they think they diſcover an oppoſition between his doctrine and his conduct; does he fall under the reproach of a hireling, who for the ſake of lucre or from vain-glory maintains what he does

not believe, and recommends what he does not practiſe: then, let his talents be never ſo eminent, his diſcourſes be never ſo excellent and melting, his diligence and zeal in diſcharging the duties of his function be never ſo great; yet with all this he will accompliſh but little; it is likely he will effect not half ſo much as another, who, with far meaner talents, diſcourſes not near ſo elegantly compoſed and delivered, and exerting a far more moderate zeal and induſtry, has a reputation for ſincerity and exemplary conduct.

And the caſe is juſt the ſame with us all, my friends, in whatever ſituation we are placed. The better the opinion mankind entertain of us, the more eaſily and effectually may we be uſeful to others, and promote the general welfare; the readier acceptance will our advice obtain; the deeper impreſſion will our exhortations, admonitions, corrections, make; the greater influence will our good example have. Let the man who has once loſt his good name, who for inſtance has once been ſtigmatized as a bigot or a hypocrite, let him perform never ſuch generous actions; let him never ſo feelingly exhort to virtue and piety; let him exhibit never ſo much devotion, or meekneſs, or moderation, in his words and deeds, whom will all this move? Whom will it allure to imitation? On the other hand, who does not account it his glory to follow him whom he himſelf eſteems, and of whom a favourable opinion is entertained by the whole community? So very much, my friends,

does the ſucceſs of our endeavours to make the beſt uſe of our capacities and powers, and uniformly to do as much good in the world as we are able, depend upon the good or bad repute in which we are held!

Add to this laſtly, my pious hearers, that a good reputation may even contribute much to our moral improvement and perfection; and that on the contrary the loſs of it often miſleads a man into the groſſeſt profligacy, into a completely immoral and diſſolute conduct. This is a circumſtance that deſerves your utmoſt attention, and places the great value of a good reputation beyond all manner of doubt. If we know that we are generally allowed to poſſeſs certain abilities, good qualities, virtues; that we are held incapable of committing any unjuſt, baſe, ſiniſter action; that much good is ſpoken of our underſtanding and our heart; that we are acknowledged to be upright and eſtimable members of ſociety: what a ſtrong incitement muſt it be to exert theſe abilities and good qualities; actually to exerciſe theſe virtues; carefully to avoid theſe bad actions; to do honour to our underſtanding and our heart; and to preſerve the eſteem in which we ſtand by an inoffenſive and a praiſe-worthy conduct!

I am not ignorant, that he who is incited to right, and reſtrained from wrong, by theſe conſiderations alone, does not yet deſerve the name of a virtuous man; we neither can however nor ought to be indifferent to the opinion of our fellow-

low-creatures; and when the concern for the preſervation of our good name is accompanied and ſupported by ſome more noble motives, it may very lawfully be a means of facilitating us in the diſcharge of our duties, and ſo, by rendering us more attentive to all our diſcourſes and actions, promote our perfection. At leaſt, the wrong is left undone, and the right is done; and the more frequently, even in views that are not of the very firſt quality, we omit the one and do the other, ſo much in proportion muſt our diſpoſition to the one be weakened, and our aptitude to the other be increaſed, and ſo much the more eaſily ſhall we be acted upon by the nobler motives to integrity and virtue.

On the other hand, is the good name once loſt; then, with moſt men, that is loſt which to them was the ſtrongeſt preſervative from follies and ſins. They had before abſtained from many obliquities of conduct to which they had ſufficient inclination and inducement, for the ſake of preſerving the character of honeſt men, or of being reſpected by others; they probably have done violence to themſelves; have performed many a juſt, reaſonable, beneficent, generous action, in direct oppoſition to their own principles and propenſities; have probably, at different times, made a ſurrender of their private emolument to the public benefit, for the pleaſure ariſing from fame; they have at leaſt avoided whatever might be offenſive to others and

excite indignation. At preſent, finding they have miſſed of their aim, ſince mankind refuſe them what they had a right to pretend to as a compenſation for the violence they did to themſelves; ſince they are judged and treated as if they had done juſt the reverſe; they now no longer keep any meaſures, but wholly abandon themſelves to their propenſities and paſſions. They at once give up all hope of maintaining the reputation of honeſt, worthy men, and uſeful citizens; concern themſelves no more therefore about their fame; deſpiſe the cenſures of their fellow-beings; and never inquire any more whether an action be offenſive or inoffenſive, laudable or ſcandalous; and thus by conſtantly making farther advances in follies and irregularities, they are continually becoming more averſe to all good, and more incapable of it, till at length they ſink into a ſtate of inſenſibility and hardneſs of heart, that renders their amendment nearly impoſſible. So much depends in this reſpect likewiſe on the preſervation or the loſs of a good name; and ſo certain is it that the worth of it far exceeds that of riches and all other outward privileges and endowments.

And now what concluſion are we to draw from all this? How ought we to frame our behaviour conſiſtently with this truth, which we cannot deny? It impoſes on us a variety of ſerious obligations, my friends, and I will wind up this diſcourſe with a few words of exhortation to the obſervance of them.

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Is a good reputation of ſo great a value; does it contribute ſo much to the promotion of our welfare and ſatisfaction; without it can we, even with the beſt intentions, neither duly exerciſe our talents and abilities, nor be really uſeful to mankind? Oh ſtrive then to your utmoſt to preſerve this precious jewel, you that are in poſſeſſion of it! Set a watch in this reſpect over all your words and actions, and ſedulouſly avoid whatever has a tendency to leſſen the good opinion you poſſeſs in the minds of others. Suppoſe not that this concern is unbecoming a virtuous and high-ſpirited man. It will be unbecoming if the deſire of pleaſing be the great motive of your actions; if you only regulate your behaviour, without regard to the rules of juſtice and equity, by the opinion of other men; or if you value their eſteem and their applauſe more than the approbation of your conſcience and the favour of God.

No, our firſt queſtion ſhould ever be, What is right? What is proper? What is conſiſtent with my nature and the will of God? What is my duty as a man, as a chriſtian, as a citizen, as a father of a family? And, in determining theſe queſtions, neither the approbation nor the cenſure of mankind ſhould be of any account whatever. We ſhould act upon certain principles, and to theſe we ſhould invariably adhere. By this means however we ſhall moſt certainly ſecure to ourſelves the eſteem of the beſt and worthieſt part of the community,

munity, and on moſt occaſions, ſhall infallibly, without anxiouſly ſeeking it, or making it our leading object, obtain their approbation.

But does the queſtion turn upon actions that are determined by no particular law, that we may either perform or neglect, wherein we may proceed in this manner or in that; and in that caſe we regulate our conduct ſo as beſt tends to eſtabliſh our good reputation: by ſo doing, we not only are not chargeable with any criminal paſſion for fame; we act not only with prudence, but in perfect conſiſtence with our duty, which enjoins us to do everything whereby we may mediately become uſeful to others, or acquire a greater and ſurer influence on the advancement of the general intereſt. The good name may be weakened and loſt not only by the actual commiſſion of evil, but even by the appearance of it; not only by unjuſt and baſe, but even by innocent yet imprudent diſcourſes and actions. Abſtain then from all appearances of evil, and walk, as the apoſtle recommends, with circumſpection and prudence; not as fools, but as wiſe.

If farther a good reputation be ſo highly valuable, imprint it deeply on your minds, that you cannot attack the good name of your neighbour, or bring it by any means into contempt, without cauſing manifeſt injury to the whole ſociety and rendering yourſelf guilty of the moſt crying injuſtice, and frequently of the uttermoſt degree of inhumanity and cruelty. Rather rob your neighbour of his property; wound

wound him in his perſon; plunge him into poverty and indigence! You will generally hurt him leſs, and do him a more ſupportable injury, than by unjuſtly depriving him of the eſteem he poſſeſſes among his fellow-beings. With this eſteem he may repair the other wrongs you do him; without it, as it frequently happens, neither opulence, nor ſtation, nor life itſelf, have any charms for him. Regard not therefore the reputation of your brother, be his condition in life what it may, as a matter of ſport, as a ſubject for merriment, on which we may boldly diſplay our wit. Conſtantly reflect how eaſily the good name of the inoffenſive may be injured, and how difficult it is to heal the wounds we give it. An ambiguous word, a myſterious look, an eloquent ſilence, a ſneering ſmile, a malicious BUT, a few qualifying IFS and pretended apologies, are more than ſufficient to inſinuate the moſt unfavourable impreſſion of the character or the conduct of a perſon into the mind of the unthinking, the credulous, or the malicious hearer, to give riſe to the moſt diſadvantageous reports, and to undermine the credit of a harmleſs or deſerving member of the community. Unhappily ſuch a report may ſo quickly ſpread, the raiſed ſuſpicion may ſo rapidly ſtrike root, ſo many circumſtances may conſpire to render it credible, that it is often immediately no more in your power to repair the miſchief you have done. In vain would you now recall your imprudent expreſſions; in vain attempt to ſlur

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over the matter as a miſunderſtanding, an inadvertent eſcape, a jeſt, a trifling ludicrous conceit; in vain will you even implore forgiveneſs of the injured man! Probably this alteration in your language or your behaviour will be attributed to cowardiſe, or to complaiſance, or to ſelf-love, or to certain tacit conventions or compromiſes ſince made; it will be long ere you can effect a perſuaſion that there was nothing at all in the matter, and probably it may require whole years before you can, even by the moſt earneſt endeavours, be able to efface the impreſſion you have made upon others to the prejudice of your neighbour. And if, with all your pains, you are unable to do this; — then have you, probably for ever, deſtroyed the peace of an innocent man; ſapped the foundation of his happineſs and of thoſe that belong to him; rendered a uſeful member of ſociety unprofitable or of little ſervice; you have probably deprived him of all heart to amendment had he been ſo inclined; and him, whom a concern for his good name retained within the bounds of moderation and honour, you have rendered alike indifferent both to honour and to ſhame. What a flagrant enormity, my pious hearers! How dreadful will it be to you in the hour of ſerious reflection, or in your dying moments! Can we then ever be too circumſpect, too conſcientious, when we have to do with our neighbour's fame? Surely no; the greater the value, and the more irreparable the loſs of it, the more ſacred ſhould it be to us; and the

the more ſhould we abſtain from whatever has a tendency to leſſen or impair it. Let us then bridle our tongue and keep a watch at the door of our lips, and baniſh from our heart all envy, all hatred, all bitterneſs and animoſity againſt our brethren. Let us abhor and deteſt not only manifeſt lying and ſlandering, but likewiſe regard and avoid all baſe defamation, all harſh and ſevere judgments on our neighbour, as ſins which can by no means be made to conſiſt with the charity and the character of a real chriſtian. Let us put on the bowels of compaſſion, friendlineſs, meekneſs, gentleneſs and patience, as becomes the children of God and the diſciples of Jeſus; bearing and forgiving one another with the moſt cordial affection; and ſo act with all men, and ſo judge of every one, as we ſhould deſire, in ſimilar circumſtances, that they would act by us and judge of our behaviour. But, above all things, let us clothe ourſelves with charity, which is the bond of perfection.

SERMON XL.

Of Converſion from a bad courſe of Life.

GOD, we preſent ourſelves before thee this day to acknowledge our ſins and tranſgreſſions. We would not conceal them, we would not attempt to juſtify ourſelves in thy ſight; we could not anſwer thee one of a thouſand. Notwithſtanding all that thou haſt done for us, moſt merciful Father, to draw us to thee by making our duty a delight, we have yet refuſed to obey thee, and have ſwerved from thy commandments. Virtue and religion are not of ſo much weight with us as they ought to be with the wiſe, with chriſtians; ſenſuality, unbelief and doubt have weakened their reſpect and rendered ſome of us indifferent towards them; the world and its deceitful, fugacious pleaſures too forcibly attract our appetites and affection; we are more intent upon gratifying our intemperate paſſions and unſubdued deſires than on rendering ourſelves worthy of the glorious appellation of chriſtians. We are thy creatures; but rebellious and guilty creatures:

tures: we preſume to call thee our Father; but we are moſtly diſobedient, ungrateful children, who will not ſubmit to thy chaſtening hand, who offend thee in thought, in words, in deeds. Neither thy benefactions nor thy chaſtiſements have been effectual to bring about thy gracious deſigns upon us. Often have we vowed amendment; but our vows yet remain unpaid. Often have we attempted to ſet about the performance of our good reſolves; but they ſtill remain unperformed. God, of what unfaithfulneſs, of what reiterated ſins and tranſgreſſions are we not guilty in thy ſight! Yes, we confeſs them, we bewail them, we are aſhamed of them. Our own conſciences condemn us. How then could we ſubſiſt before thee, wert thou to enter into judgment with us; before thee, who art a righteous judge, and of purer eyes than to behold iniquity? Lo, as criminals worthy of death, we proſtrate ourſelves at the foot-ſtool of thy mercy-ſeat. Spare us, o Lord, and be gracious unto us! — Though we are caſt out of thy ſight, yet will we look again to thy holy temple. We ariſe and come to thee, our Father; for though we have offended thee, thou art a father ſtill. Thou now art ſeated on a throne of mercy, and wieldeſt a ſceptre of grace. At thy mercy-ſeat former offenders have been forgiven, and former ſinners have been taken into favour. To thy ears the cry of the penitent has never aſcended in vain. Thou art ever nigh to all who call upon thee in ſincerity of heart. When

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we tend to thee, at the firſt ſtep of our return, thou ſtretcheſt out thy hand to receive us. Remit the puniſhment we deſerve for our ſins, and deliver us from the power and dominion of them. Thou deſireſt not the death of the ſinner, but that he ſhould be converted and live: thou rejecteſt not the prayer and ſupplication of thoſe who flee to thee for ſuccour: thou haſt ſent thy ſon into the world, that the world by him might be ſaved: let us alſo be partakers of his ſalvation, and for his ſake forgive us all our tranſgreſſions! — And that we may no more have the misfortune to diſpleaſe thee, our almighty father and beſt friend, grant us the aſſiſtance of thy holy ſpirit! That it may ever operate and reſide within us, diſſipate all our prejudices and errors, cleanſe and ſanctify all our affections. Do thou eradicate from our hearts whatever is diſpleaſing to thee; reſcue us from the violence of all baſe, inordinate luſts and paſſions, let the ſincere, effective deſire, the earneſt endeavour to pleaſe thee and to do thy will, be the governing principle of our future behaviour. Remove from us, by thy wiſe and kind providence, all temptations and allurements to ſin; and, if we be tempted, grant that we may not fall under the temptation, but that, ſtrengthened by thy ſpirit, we may conquer all and perſevere to the end in our fidelity to thee. Hearken to our ſupplications, o merciful God, turn again to us thy propitiated countenance, no more to be intercepted or eclipſed,

for

for the ſake of thy everlaſting love, by Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe comprehenſive words we conclude our prayers: Our father, &c.

LUKE XV. 18, 19.

I will ariſe and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me as one of thy hired ſervants.

IT would lead us too far from the particular appointment of this day, my friends, were we to enter upon a circumſtantial inveſtigation of the prejudices and errors which furniſhed our ſaviour with an occaſion for delivering the parable to which our text belongs. Let it ſuffice in general to obſerve, that Chriſt juſtifies himſelf by it againſt the unjuſt accuſations of the ſcribes and phariſees, who imputed it to him as a crime that he converſed with ſinners, took an intereſt in their condition, and vouchſafed them his inſtruction. And how could our lord better refute the unfounded ſuſpicion of a criminal intercourſe with ſinners which that accuſation was intended to convey, and at the ſame time more confound his malicious accuſers, than by ſhewing them in ſeveral eaſy, beautiful and affecting parables, that nothing is in ſtricter conformity with ſound reaſon, with the general ſenſe and con-

duct of mankind, than to be principally concerned about that which is loſt, to take all poſſible pains to recover it, and when that object is attained, to rejoice more over it, than over what we have long quietly poſſeſſed? Who but muſt, judging impartially, naturally draw this concluſion, that it was by no means unbecoming in the ſaviour of the world to concern himſelf about the information, the improvement and the conſolation of ſuch perſons as were utterly deſpiſed and neglected by their hypocritical teachers, though, as it appears, they were more ſincerely deſirous of the ſalvation of God, than their haughty deſpiſers? Was not Chriſt ſent into the world by God for the very purpoſe of preaching to the wretched, of announcing good tidings to the meek, of binding up the broken-hearted, proclaiming liberty to the captives, and ſeeking that which was loſt? Was it not rather the ſick and the infirm that were in need of a phyſician, than the really or imaginary healthy and robuſt? This, my dear hearers, is the connection wherein the words of our text ſtand with the purport to which they were delivered by our divine inſtructor. Let us now proceed to make a more general application of them, by conſidering the narrative of the forlorn ſon as the ſimilitude of a penitent and returning ſinner.

This edifying parable contains three particulars extremely intereſting. The firſt comprehends what paſſed previous to the return of the prodigal ſon to his

his father. This will afford us an opportunity to ſpeak of the motives to converſion, and of the preparatives to it. The ſecond particular relates to the actual return of the loſt ſon to his father, and the manner and nature of it. This will teach us wherein true penitence and converſion properly conſiſt. The third particular, laſtly, repreſents to us the happy conſequences of this converſion; and this repreſentation will inform us of the various and great advantages of true penitence and converſion.

"When he came to himſelf," ſays the parable, "he ſaid, How many hired ſervants of my father's have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger. I will ariſe and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee." When he came to himſelf. With great propriety is this expreſſion uſed; for a wicked man is beſide himſelf. Madneſs, ſays Solomon, is in the heart of the ſinner. As madneſs is a diſeaſe of the rational powers, ſo is vice of the moral. Sin in like manner unhinges the whole frame of the moral agent, tinges with its baleful colours every ſentiment of the heart, and preſents to view a ſpectacle more melancholy ſtill, a being made after the image of God, ſinking that image into the reſemblance of a brute, or the character of a fiend. Mad however as ſuch perſons are, they are not always ſo. Sin cannot always keep its ground. The evil principle has its hour of weakneſs and decline. There is no man uniformly

wicked. The exertion is too ſtrong to laſt forever. Nature does not afford ſtrength and ſpirits ſufficient to keep a man always in energy. The moſt abandoned have fits and ſtarts of ſoberneſs and reflection. There are lucid intervals in the life of every perſon. At ſuch a time is the criſis of a man's character. At ſuch a time the prodigal came to his right mind. At once the ſpell was broken, and the inchantment diſſolved. He is amazed, he is confounded to find himſelf degraded from the rational character; caſt down to the herd of inferior animals; making one at the feaſt where the vileſt of brutes were his aſſociates and companions. Then the falſe colours with which fancy had gilded his life, vaniſh away. The flattering ideas which imagination and paſſion preſented to his mind, diſappear in a moment. Diſenchanted from the deluſions of thoſe deceivers, what he eſteemed to be the garden of Eden, he finds to be a deſolate wilderneſs. Then he came to himſelf. This, my friends, it was that ſtimulated the forlorn ſon to his return; and theſe or ſimilar ſentiments and emotions are what muſt awaken the ſinner to converſion, and prepare him for it. The loſt ſon firſt becomes ſenſible of his miſery. Till now he thought himſelf happy in having ſhaken off the authority and withdrawn himſelf from the vigilance of his father. The licentious freedom he enjoyed, the extravagant and diſſolute life he led, the tumultuous pleaſures he met with on all hands, flattered his appetites.

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They ſtunned his moral ſenſe; they concealed futurity from his view, and he thought he had no reaſon to repent of his ſenſeleſs choice. But now having run through all his means, fallen into the extremes of poverty and contempt, obliged to put up with the vileſt ſervitude, and to content himſelf with the coarſeſt fare, and with all ſcarcely able to ſupport his life: he wakes from his wretched deluſion. The inchanting dreams of pleaſure and happineſs by which he has been hitherto deluded, are now vaniſhed away. He finds himſelf cheated in his expectations. He can no longer conceal his wretchedneſs from himſelf. He ſeverely feels the deplorable conſequences of his fooliſh conduct; he groans under the burden of it; and theſe painful ſenſations compel him to think ſeriouſly on emancipating himſelf from them.

Juſt ſo it is, pious hearers, with the man that awakes from the lethargy of vice. He proceeds perhaps for a long time ſecure and careleſs in his wicked ways, breaks every tie of religion and virtue, refuſes due obedience to his creator and lord, and takes that for liberty which is in fact the hardeſt and moſt infamous bondage. The ſinful appetites which he blindly follows, captivate him with their deceitful charms; they promiſe him a round of pleaſure and delight; and he fondly imagines he has found out the way that leads to true felicity. The vehement calls of paſſion ſtifle the voice of reaſon and conſcience; the affairs and diſſipations of this

world ſhut the avenues of his mind againſt all ſerious thoughts, and, like a man intoxicated with the fumes of inflammatory liquors, ſees not the danger that awaits him. But when the poiſon of ſin has had its effect; when diſquiet, vexation, and diſguſt, take place of pleaſure; when pain and ſickneſs, or other adverſe events, ſtimulate him, as it were, to reflect on himſelf and his moral condition; when the loſs of his property, the ſudden death of his friend, the unexpected failure of his plans, or other ſtriking occurrences fill him with diſmay; when the light of truth, in this ſuſpenſion of the paſſions, in this ſtillneſs of the heart, darts upon his mind, and the darkneſs of prejudice and error, which had hitherto blinded him, is diſpelled: he then begins to underſtand the deceitfulneſs of ſin, then its faſcinating charms are diſſipated before him. It appears to him in all its deformity, as ghaſtly and deteſtable as it really is; and he is ſeized with the utmoſt aſtoniſhment that he could ever be impoſed on by ſuch empty impoſtures. He now feels the degrading, the cruel ſhackles by which he is bound, and ſees that he, who thought himſelf erewhile ſo free, is in fact the moſt wretched of ſlaves. He now taſtes the bitter fruits of ſin, and experiences what ſorrow and anguiſh of heart it occaſions when a man forſakes the Lord his God, and eſteems anything but him as his ſovereign good. His falſe repoſe is now come to an end; his ſecurity makes way for trouble and affright; his fooliſh hopes are

vaniſhed; his conſcience goads and condemns him. He now ſhudders at the danger he before derided with arrogant ſcorn; he feels the manifold miſery he has brought on himſelf by his ſins, and the diſorder that prevails in his ſoul; he confeſſes that nothing can render him more deplorably wretched than he is; and this confeſſion begets in him an earneſt deſire to be delivered and happy.

But to render this acknowledgment effective, and theſe deſires ſalutary, he muſt now faithfully follow the light that has dawned upon him. He muſt carefully cheriſh the good emotions that have ſucceeded to his inſenſibility, and apply himſelf to ſuch conſiderations as may move him to adopt firm and unchangeable reſolutions. The poor unhappy youth in the parable awaking as from a dream, recovering as from a delirium, was not only ſenſible to his miſery, but he compared his forlorn condition with the various and great advantages which he might have enjoyed. "How many hired ſervants," ſays he, "of my father, have bread enough and to ſpare, and I periſh with hunger!" He tranſports himſelf into the time paſt, his former life recurs to his mind, his father's houſe riſes to view, he recalls the firſt of his days before he went aſtray. Happy days of early innocence and early piety, before remorſe had embittered his hours, or vice corrupted his heart! Happy days! when the morning aroſe in peace, and the evening went down in innocence; when no action of the paſt day

diſturbed his ſlumbers by night; when no reflection on the riots of the night threw a cloud over the ſucceeding day; when he was at peace with his own heart; when conſcience was on his ſide; when reflection was a friend; when memory preſented only welcome images to the mind; when under the wings of parental care he was bleſſed in his going out and his coming in; when his father's eye met his with approbation and delight.

Having viewed the picture, he compares it with his preſent ſituation. Sad contraſt! By his own folly, a vagabond in a foreign land; baniſhed from all that he valued and held dear; cut off from the joys of his better days; languiſhing out life under the moſt abject form of miſery; pining under poverty; ſunk into ſervitude; feeding ſwine, and himſelf deſiring to partake with them in their huſks; miſerable without, but more miſerable within; a ſpirit wounded by remorſe; a heart torn by reflection on itſelf, an accuſing conſcience which told him that he merited his fate, and which held up to him his paſt life in its blackeſt colours of folly and guilt. Aſtoniſhed at himſelf, ſtartled at his own image, which in its true colours he had never ſeen before, he was aſhamed of his conduct, and came to a better mind. Such were the effects of conſideration, and ſuch will ever be the effects of conſideration to thoſe who duly exerciſe it. Why does the ſinner go forward in the error of his ways? Becauſe he does not conſider. Conſider

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your ways, is the voice which God addreſſes to mankind in every age; and unleſs you conſider, the calls of the goſpel and the offers of grace are made to no purpoſe. The world which is to come has no exiſtence to you but what you give it yourſelves; the eternity that is before us, the happineſs of heaven and the pains of retributive juſtice, are no more than dreams, unleſs you realize them to yourſelves, unleſs you give them their full force, by bringing them home to the heart. When a man reviews the error of his ways, nothing is wanting to a farther reformation but reflection and thought. Think, — and the work is done. "I conſidered my ways," ſays the pſalmiſt. What was the conſequence? "I turned my feet unto thy teſtimonies."

So thought the loſt young man; and ſo the repentant ſinner thinks, who is in earneſt, and anxious about his ſalvation. What a bleſſing, ſays he to himſelf, have I voluntarily rejected by my ſins and my follies! Happy had it been for me, if I had hearkened to the voice of God and of my conſcience, if I had followed their affectionate admonitions and remonſtrances, if I had retained my innocence, and remained faithful to my duty! How rational, how equitable, how reaſonable are all the commands of God, and how happy would the obſervance of them have made me! The ineſtimable favour of the ſupreme being, inward peace, ſatisfaction of mind, the conſciouſneſs of my integrity,

integrity, the eſteem and love of all the good, the certain hope of everlaſting glory, would have delighted all my days; they would have ſweetened the cup of life, and have alleviated the burden of its cares; they would have ſhed a divine tranſport upon my ſoul. Under the protection of my heavenly father I ſhould have dwelt in ſafety; and in the ſhadow of his wings have had no want or misfortune to fear. And theſe bleſſings have I ſacrificed to the fallacious pleaſures of ſin! I have ſhaken off the mild authority of my creator and benefactor, and am now under the cruel ſway of the moſt ſcandalous and corrupt deſires. All the powers of my mind are debilitated; diſorder and incongruity diſturb my ſoul; wickedneſs is become as it were a ſecond nature to me; and I feel myſelf too weak to enter the liſts againſt it, and recover the freedom I have loſt. God has hid his gracious countenance from me. I have brought upon myſelf his terrible diſpleaſure, and live at a moſt deplorable diſtance from him. And what will become of me if death overtake me in this condition, if I am cited to appear in this ſad condition before the judge of the living and the dead? How can I ſupport his look? How can I ſtand before him, the Omniſcient! With what excuſes can I palliate my premeditated and ſo often repeated violations of his law, or extenuate my ingratitude and my defection! What a ſevere but righteous condemnation have I to dread! How horrible will be my portion for eternity!

eternity! Oh that I had never ſinned! Oh that I had never forſaken my Father and my Redeemer; never caſt off the fear of God! Who will now redeem me from this miſery! Where ſhall I find help and deliverance! — But, continues the contrite ſinner, is there then no precious gleam of hope, no ray of comfort, to my amazed ſoul? Is no remedy at hand to reſcue me from deſerved condemnation, for ſtill becoming happy? Oh, I have read that the Lord is gracious, long-ſuffering, and plenteous in mercy; that he will not deſpiſe the broken and contrite heart; that ſuch as return to him he will in no wiſe caſt out; that he will graciouſly look to him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and trembles at his word. Does not the goſpel tell me that he ſent his ſon to be the ſaviour of men; and that all who truſt in him, and follow his ſacred precepts, he will for his ſake again receive as his children? Perhaps then he will have compaſſion on me, and give me grace for juſtice, if I humble myſelf before him, and turn to him with my whole heart. No, my miſery is too great! The danger I am in is too imminent, to allow me room to hope that any thing can ſnatch me from it.

Such are the agitations and fears of the returning ſinner; till his ſpirit worn out with woe, his eyes diſſolved in tears, and his heart all rent with compunction, he takes up the reſolution which we may conſider as the third ſtage of his converſion.

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To wicked men labouring under the agonies of a guilty mind, the deity appears an object of terror. They figure to themſelves an angry tyrant, with his thunder in his hand, delighting to puniſh and deſtroy. They are afraid, and flee from the preſence of the Lord. But from the mind of the penitent theſe terrors preſently vaniſh, and God appears, not as a cruel and malignant power, but as the beſt of beings, the father of mercies and the friend of man, as a God in Chriſt reconciling the world unto himſelf. Encouraged by theſe declarations, the penitent truſts to the divine goodneſs, and flies for refuge to the hope ſet before him. Horrors of conſcience and forebodings of wrath overwhelm the ſons of reprobation. But the penitent never deſpairs. He ſinks indeed in his own eyes, and throws himſelf proſtrate on the ground, but ſtill throws himſelf at the footſtool of mercy, not without the faith and the hope that he will be taken into favour. The language of his ſoul is: Great God, withhold from me what elſe thou pleaſeſt, but give me to enjoy the approbation of my own mind and thy favour. I would rather henceforth be the humbleſt of thy ſons than dwell in the tents of wickedneſs.

"I will ariſe," ſays the contrite youth, "and go to my father, and will ſay unto him, Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven, and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon; make me as one of thy hired ſervants." I will immediately embrace

embrace the only means ſtill left me to employ, for avoiding utter ruin, before it be too late and all repentance be in vain. I will exert the little ſtrength I have remaining, to haſten from the abyſs that lies open before me. The ſmalleſt delay may be fatal to me. To regain my ſquandered hopes ſhall from this inſtant be my ſole concern; and nothing ſhall be too hard for me to undertake that can favour my deſign. Let the ſhame and confuſion be as great as it may, into which the conſciouſneſs of my follies and the ſight of my injured father will throw me; let the reproaches I have to expect from him be as cutting as they will to my vanity and pride; coſt what labour and ſelf-denial it may at firſt to renounce my wicked habits, and to ſatisfy my ſo long neglected duties: nothing ſhall prevent me from returning to him whom I have ſo ſenſeleſsly forſaken, and aſking ſuccour of him who alone is diſpoſed and able to help me. I will go and throw myſelf at his feet; I will prevent his reproaches by an humble and frank confeſſion of my tranſgreſſions and errors; and, inſtead of thinking on evaſion or excuſe, will condemn myſelf, and caſt myſelf entirely on his mercy. It is not an auſtere, an inexorable maſter; it is a compaſſionate and tender father with whom I have to do. What has not a ſon to hope for from ſuch a father? Yes, his own heart will ſpeak pity for me, he will ſhew mercy towards me; and this ſhall be my inducement to teſtify my gratitude to

him

him by a willing and faithful obedience, and to render myſelf worthy of his favour by a total alteration of my ſentiments and my conduct.

The ſame reſolutions, my friends, are adopted by the repentant ſinner. He truſts not to a deceitful and inefficient ſorrow. He is not contented with making bitter lamentations on his wretched condition, or barely wiſhing to become better, without putting his hand to the work. He waſtes not his time in uſeleſs doubt or in dangerous heſitation. My life, ſays he, is paſſing quickly away; it may unexpectedly come to an end. Death, judgment, and eternity, are ever advancing towards me; they may ſeize me at unawares. Shall not I then haſten to deliver my ſoul? Shall I not work while it is day, ere the night come when no man can work? There is but one way left to avoid perdition. Shall I heſitate one moment about betaking myſelf to it? Life and death, bleſſing and curſing, are now before me. Still I have an opportunity of chuſing between them. Who can tell whether that will continue to me if I ſtand longer doubting? Is it difficult for me now to ſubdue my ſinful deſires, to quit my bad habits, break with my bad companions, and reform my diſſolute life: will it not every day become ſtill harder? Will not my ſervitude be growing conſtantly more ſevere, my propenſity to vice more ſtrong, my whole temper more corrupt, and conſequently my amendment ſtill more impracticable? Shall I not by theſe means

means be heaping ſin upon ſin, and puniſhment upon puniſhment, and ſo at length deprive myſelf of all hope of forgiveneſs? No! to-day, that I hear the voice of God, while his grace is yet offered to me, to-day will I follow his affectionate call, and earneſtly implore that divine compaſſion which alone can make me happy. My reſolution is taken, and nothing ſhall hinder me from bringing it to effect. I will ariſe and go to my heavenly Father, from whom I am now at ſo great a diſtance, whoſe favour and protection I have ſo madly caſt off. I will bow myſelf before his offended majeſty, acknowledge my tranſgreſſions, and intreat his compaſſion with a broken and a contrite heart. I will ſolemnly renounce every ſin, and devote myſelf to the ſervice of God and the practice of virtue. Have I hitherto ſhaken off his juſt and gentle authority; it ſhall now be my greateſt delight and my glory to pay him an unreſerved obedience, and faithfully to fulfil the duties of a ſubject in his kingdom. Have I hitherto followed my irregular deſires and the corrupted principles of the men of the world; henceforward the law of the Moſt High ſhall be the ſole and unalterable rule of my conduct. Have I hitherto cared only for my body and my earthly condition; henceforward, the care of my ſoul, and my happineſs in the future world, ſhall be the ultimate aim of all my endeavours. The ſupport which God has promiſed to the ſincere will be mighty in my weakneſs. He will aſſiſt me in conquering

quering every difficulty; and I truſt aſſuredly that I ſhall find his yoke to be eaſy, and his burden light; that I ſhall experience that his commandments are not grievous.

If the reſolutions of the repentant ſinner be thus formed, my friends; if they be grounded on ſelf-inſpection, on conſideration and firm conviction; if they be taken with ſerioufneſs and ſincerity; they will certainly be brought to effect. Without determined purpoſes of amendment, contrition is unavailing and ineffectual. The deity is not delighted with the ſufferings of man. Sorrow for ſin is ſo far pleaſing, as it ſoftens the heart and makes it better. It is the reſolution of amendment, the purpoſes pointed to reformation, that make the broken heart and the contrite ſpirit an acceptable ſacrifice; ſuch is the nature of true repentance; it flows not ſo much from the ſenſe of danger as from the love of goodneſs.

In true repentance, there is not only a change of mind, but a change of life. When the day-ſpring from on high ariſes on him who is in darkneſs, when God ſays let there be light, the ſcales fall off from his eyes, a new world breaks upon his view, futurity becomes preſent, and inviſible things are ſeen; then firſt he beholds the beauty which is in holineſs, and taſtes the joy which flows from returning virtue. In that happy hour he forms the pious purpoſe, and ſeals the ſacred vow to be holy for ever. Then he prefers the peace derived from

from virtue, and the joy which ariſes from a good conſcience, to every conſideration. Then the devoted ſervants of God appear to him the only happy men, and he would rather rank with the meaneſt of theſe than enjoy the riches of many wicked. His heart is convinced that none can enter into the kingdom of heaven, and ſit down at the right hand of the Father, but they who prefer the teſtimony of a good conſcience, the ſmiles of heaven, and the ſentence of the juſt, to all the treaſures of the world.

Had the penitent not been in earneſt, falſe ſhame might have prevented or retarded his return. Conſcious of guilt, and covered with confuſion, how ſhall he appear before his friends and acquaintance? I know, might he have ſaid, the malice of an ill-judging and injurious world. The ſins which are blotted out from the book of God's remembrance are not forgotten by them. Let me fly rather to the uttermoſt parts of the earth, retire to the wilderneſs untrod by the foot of man, and hide me in the ſhades which the beams of the ſun never pierced, than be expoſed to the ſcorn and contumely and reproach of all around me.

But the penitent was determined and immoveable, he would not ſuffer himſelf to be diverted from his purpoſe. He immediately began to put it in execution. He aroſe and came to his father, and ſaid unto him, "Father, I have ſinned againſt heaven and before thee, and am no more worthy to be called thy ſon." I have outrageouſly offend-

ed both God and thee; I have rendered myſelf utterly unworthy of thy parental love. Thus did he humble himſelf before his father. He acknowledged his paſt offences, and ſought no ſubterfuges, no extenuations of his guilt, but confeſſed them for what they really were. He owned that he had forfeited all pretenſions to the privileges he had before enjoyed in his father's houſe. He manifeſted a ſincere remorſe at his enormities, and petitioned for grace and pardon. He ſubmitted himſelf anew to the diſcipline and authority of his father, promiſed freſh obedience to all his commands, and returned effectively to his duty. And in this particular conſiſts the true repentance and converſion which God requires from man. He ſhould confeſs the multitude, the greatneſs, the enormity of his ſins; and, inſtead of thinking on his juſtification, ſhould expoſe in the moſt ſubmiſſive humility all the circumſtances that render his guilt moſt deteſtable. In the utmoſt dejection of ſoul he ſhould proſtrate himſelf before his ſovereign judge, addreſs himſelf to his juſtice, and acknowledge that he has deſerved nothing but diſpleaſure and indignation, death and condemnation. He ſhould confeſs his tranſgreſſions to the Lord, and ſurrender himſelf to the ſhame and confuſion which the ſight of them produces in him. It ſhould be a ſenſible affliction to him, that he has thus offended ſo good, ſo venerable and amiable a being; that he has affronted his creator, his father and bene-

factor;

factor; that he has tranſgreſſed ſuch righteous, ſuch wiſe, ſuch equitable laws; that he has counteracted the great end of his exiſtence, ſo depraved and degraded his nature, and ſo far departed from the purpoſes for which God created him. Theſe conſiderations ſhould fill him with unfeigned and pungent remorſe for his ſins. They ſhould force him to take refuge in the mercy of God in Chriſt Jeſus, and to implore him for grace and pardon. They ſhould inſpire him with a profound abhorrence of all iniquity, a mortal averſion to vice. They ſhould ſtrengthen him in the reſolution of quitting the ſervice of ſin, and of living to righteouſneſs; and to the execution of this purpoſe he ſhould now ſet immediately and earneſtly to work. He ſhould effectually ceaſe to do evil, and ſtudy to do good. He ſhould regulate his conduct on quite other principles and rules; or, in the figurative language of the ſcriptures, become a new creature. Nothing now ſhould be of ſo much conſequence to him, as to combat the unruly appetites and paſſions that have hitherto had the dominion over him, to fulfil the duties he has hitherto neglected, and to exerciſe himſelf in all the virtues, though never ſo much againſt his corrupt inclinations and his worldly intereſts. his , my friends, this is the eſſential article of converſion, without which all previous ſentiments and acts of penitence will be utterly vain. The unjuſt man muſt reſtore the property he obtained by unlawful means to its

rightful owner; the unchaſte, the adulterer, muſt burſt the chains with which his luſts have bound him, mortify his deſires, and cleanſe himſelf from every defilement of fleſh and ſpirit; the avaricious man muſt reform his earthly mind, muſt learn to regard the treaſures of the earth with a noble indifference, and direct his thoughts, his wiſhes, and deſires to the things that are not ſeen; the haughty muſt become humble, the rancorous gentle and forgiving, and the worldly muſt become heavenly-minded. Thus muſt every one abandon the perverſe ways he has hitherto walked, forſake the vices and ſins he has hitherto ſerved, avoid all inducements and opportunities to them, and be perfecting holineſs in the fear of God. That is what God, by the prophet requires of his people. "Waſh ye," ſays he, "make you clean; put away the evil of your doings from before mine eyes; ceaſe to do evil, learn to do well, ſeek judgment, relieve the oppreſſed, judge the fatherleſs, plead for the widow. Then come, and let us reaſon together, ſaith the Lord: though your ſins be as ſcarlet, they ſhall be white as ſnow; though they be red like crimſon, they ſhall be as wool." Yes, pious hearers, if our converſion be thus conſtituted, if it bring forth the fruits of amendment and righteouſneſs; then may we promiſe ourſelves the utmoſt advantage from it.

We learn from the parable, that the ready return of the prodigal ſon was productive of the moſt happy

happy effects. He found himſelf not diſappointed in his hopes. On the contrary, the kind reception his father gave him far ſurpaſſed his moſt ſanguine expectations. No ſooner did this tender parent deſcry his ſon, "while he was yet a great way off, but he was moved with compaſſion towards him. He ran to meet him, fell on his neck and kiſſed him." He forgot all his errors and tranſgreſſions. He immediately provided for all his wants. He reſtored him to his forfeited right of filiation, ſhewed him the moſt poſitive marks of his paternal condeſcenſion and love, and his heart yearned over him with the livelieſt emotions of ſatisfaction and joy. — "Like as a father pitieth his children, ſo the Lord pitieth them that fear him. He is nigh unto them that are of a broken heart, and ſaveth ſuch as be of a contrite ſpirit. Though he dwell in the high and holy place, yet with him alſo that is of a contrite and humble ſpirit, to revive the ſpirit of the humble, and to revive the heart of the contrite. He looketh on him that is poor and of a contrite ſpirit, and that trembleth at his word. He is inclined to pity and to ſpare. He hath no pleaſure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live." "Is not Ephraim my dear ſon," ſays God to his people, "is he not a pleaſant child? Since I ſpake againſt him I remember him ſtill; therefore my bowels are troubled for him; I will ſurely have mercy upon him, ſaith the Lord." As ſoon as the ſinner draws nigh unto

God with a truly penitent heart; as ſoon as he forſakes his ſinful courſes, and turns himſelf wholly to him; ſo ſoon does God alſo graciouſly turn towards him. He forgives him his ſins, he remits the evil conſequences of them, he takes him again into favour, and imparts to him, as his ſon, the free right of participating in all the comforts of his houſe. And how manifold, how great, are the benefits and felicities this happy alteration procures to the convert! His guilt is effaced, his ſins are done away, his iniquities are pardoned, and will be remembered no more. His conſcience is calmed. God has a gracious complacency in him. Acceſs to the throne of grace is open to him, and there he may and will find help and conſolation ſo often as they are needful to him. The inhabitants of heaven rejoice at his converſion; they rejoice at having in him a new ſharer in their bliſs. Heaven is now no longer ſhut to him. Death and the grave have laid by their terrors for him. Futurity is no longer dreadful to him. It ſhews him the immarceſſible crown of glory in the hand of his reconciled judge. It promiſes him a felicity which no mortal eye has ſeen, which no ear has heard, and which is above the conceptions of the human mind. It aſſures him of the plenitude of joy and an eternity of bliſsful exiſtence at the right hand of God. In the mean time, till his glorious hopes be fulfilled, the convert lives more ſecurely, as he lives in innocence. Peace and contentment accompany him,

him, ſince he has God for his protector and friend, and is conſcious of the rectitude of his heart. His moral corruption will daily decline, and every victory he gains over it gives him freſh cauſe to extol the grace of his redeemer, and to feel the value of his regained freedom. His ability to goodneſs is ever increaſing, and the practice of it grows daily more eaſy and pleaſant. He marches onward from one ſtep of perfection to another; his aptitude in virtue is continually growing; and with his virtue, his pleaſures and his hopes increaſe. Happy ſituation! Ineſtimable benefit! Who would not take all poſſible pains to obtain it! Who would delay one moment to enter upon the way of repentance and converſion, which alone conducts us to the poſſeſſion of this felicity! May we all, my friends, put this reſolve into immediate execution, and from this inſtant walk the paths of virtue and piety with perſevering fidelity. How bleſſed will the preſent day be to us! In what tranquil delight will the reſt of our lives flow on! How ſedately may we ſee our diſſolution approaching! How confidently may we expect the glorious recompenſes that are prepared for the righteous in the heavens!

Everything calls upon us to hearken to the voice of God, ſo affectionately inviting us to repentance and amendment. We yet live to hear that voice; but how long it may be allowed us, none of us can tell. Woe to us if we put off from day to day, till it be too late to devote ourſelves obediently to it!

Only with him, only in his ſervice and in compliance with his commands, are light and life and joy and felicity to be found; remote from him, darkneſs and bondage, miſery and death are our only portion. Merciful father, into what perils has iniquity beguiled us! We haſte to eſcape from them, and to ſeek grace and help from thee who alone canſt help and ſave. Lo, we return to thee, unworthy to be called thy ſons, but firmly reſolved by a better conduct to render ourſelves deſerving of that glorious title. We are thine, o Lord, thine by creation, and thine by redemption. We will give ourſelves up to thee as our only proprietor. Thee will we only and conſtantly obey. In thee will we ſeek our whole felicity. Oh do thou ſupply our weakneſs; keep us by thy mighty arm from relapſing into ſin; grant us to advance in goodneſs, give us to overcome the world, and by thy ſupport to perſevere unto the end.

Preached on a Faſt-Day.

SERMON XLI.

The Bleſſedneſs of Beneficence.

GOD, who art all benignity and love, who art always more ready to bleſs than to puniſh, and diſplayeſt thy infinite greatneſs by infinite bounty; daily and hourly openeſt thou thy liberal hand and filleſt all things living with plenteouſneſs. Daily and hourly giveſt thou to us freſh proofs that thy mercy is over all thy works; that thou loveſt us with parental tenderneſs; that as a father thou provideſt for us and our real welfare. Lord, with admiration and humility we adore the riches of thy grace and love; we rejoice in the multitude and the exceeding value of the unmerited gifts of thy bounty; we would fain to render thee the thanks for them which thou requireſt of us. Thou requireſt, as a proof of our acknowledgment, that we ſhould be kind, compaſſionate, beneficent, bountiful, like thee; that we ſhould be followers of thee as dear children; that we ſhould ſhare as it were with thee, the bleſſedneſs of diſpenſing good. To obey thee,

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o parent of good, is our glory and our happineſs. Thy commandments are life and peace to all that keep them. Ah let us ever confeſs it, and ever willingly be faithful to that confeſſion. Do thou eradicate all ſeeds of avarice, of ſelfiſhneſs, of obduracy and cruelty from our hearts; and fill them with the gentle, compaſſionate, affectionate, officious and diſintereſted diſpoſitions which alone can render us worthy to be called thy children and diſciples of thy ſon. Bleſs in this view the leſſons we are now to receive from thy word, and let the efficacy of them be manifeſt in abundant fruits of chriſtian beneficence. Father of an infinite majeſty, let theſe our ſupplications find acceptance with thee, for the ſake of Jeſus Chriſt, thy honourable, true and only ſon, our mediator and redeemer, in obedience to whoſe expreſs command we addreſs thee thus: Our father, &c.

ACTS, XX. 35.

It is more bleſſed to give than to receive.

THERE are times and circumſtances, my friends, when we, your miniſters, aſcend this place with heavy hearts, as having but little hope of the deſired ſucceſs in delivering to you the word of truth, and of reaping much fruit from our labour. This happens whenever our office, and a zeal for your true ſalvation,

ſalvation, require us to lay before you your ſins and failings, and among them ſuch particularly as are the moſt rife amongſt us, which are the leaſt condemned by the world, and in behalf whereof ſelf-love, pride, cuſtom, faſhion, have invented the moſt excuſes, and the moſt plauſible palliations. It happens whenever we have to deliver to you ſuch doctrines and precepts as are manifeſtly at variance with the prejudices of the times in which we live, with the prevailing manner of thinking and acting; and of ſuch doctrines and precepts chriſtianity, which derives its origin from heaven, and is ordained to conduct us thither, compriſes not a few. It happens eſpecially whenever we labour to inſpire you with the humble, the gentle, the compaſſionate, the heavenly diſpoſitions, which are the diſtinctive characteriſtics of the diſciples of Jeſus, and which yet are ſo rarely found among thoſe who call themſelves his diſciples. In theſe and the like caſes, we are tempted at times to deſpondency, as having but little hope of reaching the aim of our exertions. And whence does this proceed? Our own ſad experience but too ſtrikingly informs us, how much the corrupted heart and the unruly paſſions of men, oppoſe theſe doctrines and precepts; and how ſoon the good impreſſions, they may occaſionally make upon us in the houſe of the Lord, are obliterated in the tumult of the world.

But there are likewiſe other times, my beloved, when with confident and cheerful minds we appear before

before you, animated as we are with the pleaſing expectation, that we ſhall effect our good deſigns, if not with all, yet certainly with many. In ſuch a frame of mind, in ſuch delightful hopes, I meet you in this ſacred place to-day. I am to be the advocate, the interceſſor, with you, for the poor, the friendleſs, and the wretched: I ſhall apply to you in their name; in their name did I ſay, I ſhall apply to you in the name of Jeſus Chriſt, who owns theſe needy for his brethren, and in the moſt forcible manner recommends them to you, in the name of that exalted and beneficent Lord, our unalterable Saviour, I ſhall intercede with you in their behalf. I ſhall in particular recommend to you the encouragement of a very neceſſary and uſeful inſtitution; I mean, the proviſion now ſet on foot for the correction of the diſſolute, and the maintenance of the poor in this place: certainly an honourable and agreeable employment! Happy ſhall I be, happy will it be for you, if I execute it with that ſucceſs I promiſe myſelf from your chriſtian tenderneſs! Nay, I know that there are many compaſſionate hearts among you, to whom diſcipline and order, religion and virtue, and the happineſs of mankind ariſing from them, are no indifferent things. I have on ſimilar occaſions addreſſed you with ſimilar petitions; and, to the honour of your chriſtian profeſſion, you have not been regardleſs of them. Why then may I not hope, under the bleſſing of the Almighty, to reach my deſign to-day? In the mean time,

time, though I presume upon these beneficent and generous dispositions in the generality of you, it will not be useless to employ the remainder of the time usually allotted to these discourses in endeavouring to confirm them in our hearts, and to awaken them in those with whom they are still dormant. And how can we better do this, than by calling to mind the blessedness of beneficence? To this end the consideration of the beautiful saying of our saviour in the text may greatly conduce: It is more blessed to give than to receive. We will first state to you the justness of the assertion, and then reply to some objections that may be brought against it.

It is more blessed to give than to receive, is now become, as it were, proverbial among christians; so little is the truth of it in general called in question. Is it not then, may some one probably think, is it not unnecessary to demonstrate a proposition which every one holds for proved and undeniable? No, my friend, that is by no means the case with such general propositions and rules of conduct. In order that they should have a due influence on our behaviour, and on that everything depends, it is not enough that the truth of them is not doubted, the reasons should be often and forcibly stated why they are held to be true; we should examine the particular ideas they comprehend, or the observations and experiences whereon they rest; we should bring home the application of them to ourselves; we should view them in a various and perspicuous light,

light, in order to be convinced, affected, actuated by them. And this is the purport of my following conſiderations.

It is more bleſſed to give than to receive; ſince the former in the firſt place implies a happier condition than the latter. To the former belongs a certain degree of power, of affluence, of independence; the latter has weakneſs, want, penury, dependence, for its foundation. I will not ſay, that a man may not be happy in all ſtations. No, fear God; keep his commandments; maintain a good conſcience; ſecure to yourſelf the grace and loving-kindneſs of the Almighty; follow temperance and contentment; think and live like perſons who have here no abiding city, and whoſe country is heaven: ſo will you never be deficient in true felicity, be you otherwiſe high or low, rich or poor, in abundance or in want. But certain as this is, ſo certain is it likewiſe, that he is ſtill the happier who, with all theſe eſſential advantages, has alſo the means of doing good to others in a larger or ſmaller proportion. In what does the ſupreme felicity of God conſiſt? Undoubtedly in this, that his power of doing good is infinite, and that he continually exerts it in the beſt and moſt perfect manner. Undoubtedly in this, that, from his exalted throne, full ſtreams of benefits and bleſſings inceſſantly flow down on every part of his immenſe domain, devolving light and life, joy, energy and bliſs, on all the inhabitants of it. Wherein conſiſts the happineſs of the righteous

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in the future world? An enlarged capacity of doing good and of communicating with others in the moſt uſeful manner, will undoubtedly compoſe a conſiderable portion of it. Here, my friends, it not unfrequently happens, that men of the moſt humane, the moſt benevolent, the moſt patriotic ſentiments, are deſtitute of almoſt all the means for acting in conformity to them; and, if they had leſs veneration for the diſpoſals of divine providence, would probably be often tempted to complain of the narrow limits that are preſcribed them in theſe particulars. Yonder, in that better world, all theſe limitations will not indeed be removed; they however will be conſiderably enlarged. There will theſe generous ſpirits unimpededly purſue their beneficent inclinations, and be able to apply in a far worthier manner all their faculties to the benefit of their leſs perfect fellow-creatures. As having been faithful in the adminiſtration of the little that was entruſted to them, they will be appointed to the management of much. They will reign with Chriſt, and ſhare in his glory, his power of doing good. The more therefore a man can diſpenſe here on earth about him in any reſpect to the benefit of his brethren; the more ſerviceable he can be to them; the leſs need he has to ſet bounds to his generoſity; the greater means he has of encreaſing the ſecular or the ſpiritual, the temporal or the eternal welfare of his neighbour, and of diffuſing comfort, ſatisfaction and joy around him: ſo much the

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nearer does he bring his condition to that of the bleſſed in heaven; ſo much more reſplendent in him is the image of God and Chriſt; nay, ſo much the greater part has he even in the felicity of the firſt and moſt perfect of beings.

It is more bleſſed to give than to receive; the former being ſecondly combined with a various, with a truly godlike pleaſure, whereas the latter is commonly connected with unpleaſant and painful ſenſations. How extremely grating is it ſometimes, even to the humbleſt of thoſe who ſuffer penury and indigence, how diſtreſſing is it to them to make known their penury and their deſtitution, to aſk for ſuccour and relief, and thus to expoſe themſelves to the riſk of harſh cenſures, of cutting reproaches, of bitter ſcoffs, and at length to a blunt refuſal of all pity and aſſiſtance! What wretchedneſs, what miſery therefore do they often prefer to ſuch humiliating treatment, which fills their ſouls with grief and diſmay! Never forget this, ye whom God has bleſſed with the good things of this world, and thereby conſtituted you in a manner the guardians and fathers of the poor and needy. Render not the load that already oppreſſes them ſtill heavier by your unfriendly and cruel behaviour. They are already enough to be pitied, that they are obliged to be dependent on you, who are men as well as they. Oh let them not feel this dependence in a manner injurious to human nature, and offenſive to their creator! Beware

that

that at the very time when you are granting the ſuccours they implore, you degrade and inſult them; and attach not your benefactions to ſuch conditions as deprive them of all their value. Though they be benefactions in regard to thoſe to whom you ſhew them; they are not ſo in regard to God, who has impoſed them as a duty upon you. Though your neceſſitous brethren cannot demand them of you as their due, yet God, from whom you have received whatever you poſſeſs, has a right to demand them of you, and he actually does demand them. But the mere act alone cannot ſatisfy him, the Omniſcient, only the manner in which you perform it can procure you his approbation. Give therefore freely; give liberally; give in pure and good intentions; give in a generous and engaging manner; give as one friend gives to another, as a father gives to his children: then, and not till then, will you taſte the pleaſure which is connected with ſuch bounty. And how diverſified, how great, how ſublime, is that pleaſure! You know it, chriſtians, you who exerciſe yourſelves in beneficence with genuine chriſtian ſentiments; you know what your hearts enjoy, what pure and heavenly tranſports pervade them, when you weep with them that weep, and are ſo happy as to dry up the tears of the mourner; when you can take the forlorn to your care, and can adminiſter help to the deſtitute; when you have an opportunity to reſcue the innocent, to feed the hungry, to give drink to the

thirſty, to alleviate the diſtreſſes of the poor, to mitigate the pains of the ſick and to aſſuage the anguiſh of the afflicted ſoul; when you can compenſate as much as in you lies, the widow for the loſs of her ſpouſe, and the orphan for the privation of his parents; when you convey ſome rays of light, of comfort, of hope, of ſatisfaction, into the abodes where darkneſs, diſmay and wretchedneſs, prevailed. You know the feelings of your heart, what ſtreams of pure, celeſtial tranſports ruſh into it, when you are able to contribute ſomewhat to the advancement of diſcipline and order, of the glory of God and of religion, to the inſtruction, to the improvement, to the correction, to the ſpiritual and everlaſting happineſs of your brethren; and then repreſent to yourſelves the bleſſed conſequences theſe labours of love may have, and, under the bleſſing of the Moſt High, infallibly will have, in all the generations to come. Oh then it is you truly feel the exquiſite worth of the earthly goods wherewith God has bleſſed you; then you thank him with tears of joy for the honour and happineſs of being permitted to occupy as it were his place among mankind, and in his ſtead to revive them with what his providence has been pleaſed to grant you; then your heart expands, as ſcarcely able to contain the heavenly rapture that pervades it. Where, my friends, where is there an earthly, ſenſual pleaſure to be found, that can be brought into compariſon with this!

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It is laſtly more bleſſed to give than to receive; it having, when properly performed, the moſt glorious retributions to expect both in the preſent and in the future world. Already the pleaſure that is connected with it, and which I have now rather pointed at than deſcribed, ſince it admits of no deſcription; this pleaſure alone, to a ſenſible and generous heart, is reward enough. But the merciful God, to whom beneficence is ſo highly grateful, has decreed it ſtill greater advantages and bleſſings. Hear how the pſalmiſt deſcribes them: "Unto the upright," ſays he, particularly to the humane and bountiful, "there ariſeth light in the darkneſs; he is merciful, loving and righteous: he that fills the earth with his mercies comforts him in his afflictions, and delivers him out of them all." "Happy the man who pitieth and lendeth, and guideth his words with diſcretion; for he ſhall never be moved: the righteous ſhall be had in everlaſting remembrance. He will not be afraid at any evil tidings, for his heart ſtandeth faſt and truſteth in the Lord. His heart is ſtabliſhed, and will not ſhrink. He hath diſperſed abroad and given to the poor: his righteouſneſs remaineth for ever;" the bleſſing of his beneficence abides ever upon him; "his welfare ſhall be exalted with honour." And all this, my friends, is but little in compariſon with the glorious rewards which the bountiful man may promiſe himſelf in the future world. Repreſent to yourſelves that awful day, the day of judgment and of retribution which

ſhall decide our lot for ever; and admire the glory and felicity that will then be the portion of chriſtians who have here employed themſelves in acts of beneficence. The judge of the world, the ſon of God, will ſay to them, before the whole aſſembly of angels and of mankind: "Come, ye bleſſed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the beginning of the world. For I was hungry, and ye gave me meat; I was thirſty, and ye gave me drink; I was a ſtranger, and ye took me in; I was naked, and ye cloathed me; I was ſick, and ye viſited me; I was in priſon, and ye came to me. — Verily I ſay unto you, inaſmuch as ye have done it unto one of the leaſt of theſe my brethren, ye have done it unto me." Oh tranſporting ſcene! oh inexpreſſible reward! Let us then do good, my brethren, and never be weary, that we may alſo reap in due time this glory and this felicity. Let us not reckon that for loſt which we give to the poor and needy, but for gain; ſince certainly it is far more bleſſed in all reſpects to give than to receive.

Unhappy men, by whom this is neither felt nor underſtood, who ſtart objections againſt the performance of that duty which of all others is the moſt agreeable and bliſsful! However, we will hear your objections; we will try them; perhaps we may be ſo fortunate as to convince you of the weakneſs and futility of them.

It is true, you probably imagine, it is more bleſſed to give than to receive. But, if we guide ourſelves

ſelves by this maxim, if we follow our propenſity to beneficence, we ſhall injure ourſelves and our families; inſtead of increaſing our property, we ſhall diminiſh it. Yes, my friends, ſo you would, if the preſervation and the augmentation of your ſubſtance depended ſolely on yourſelves; ſolely on your diligence, on your ability, on your frugality, your objection would be well founded. But if, as both reaſon and ſcripture aſſure us, moſt, if in ſome ſort all depends on the bleſſing of the Higheſt; if without it the moſt aſſiduous application, the utmoſt ability, the ſtricteſt frugality, are utterly fruitleſs; and if this bleſſing be annexed to beneficence: the objection loſes all its force. And, for the confutation of it, may I not venture to appeal to your own obſervation and experience? Do you know any perſon, who, merely by beneficence duly allied with prudence, has fallen into indigence or poverty? May you not on the contrary be acquainted with ſeveral, who have conſtantly ſought their ſatisfaction in beneficence, and yet, by the bleſſing of heaven, have not only preſerved, but conſiderably augmented their property? No, "he that giveth to the poor," ſays the wiſe man, "ſhall not lack." "There is that ſcattereth, and yet increaſeth; and there is that withholdeth more than is meet, but it tendeth to poverty." Suppoſe however that it ſhould not ſeem good to the Moſt High to reward your beneficence with worldly profuſion; ſuppoſe, that you leave behind you no great riches for your children; is it

then neceſſary for their happineſs that they ſhould inherit large poſſeſſions from you? Are they always truly happy, who enjoy great wealth? Does not experience rather teach you the reverſe? How dangerous to children at all times, how ruinous often, are the treaſures they inherit from their parents! Are there not far more honeſt, ingenious, uſeful, virtuous and proſperous men, among thoſe who are indebted to their fathers and mothers for little more than a good education and a virtuous example, than among thoſe who have received from them much property, or even great affluence? Is not this property, is not this affluence, moſt commonly a ſnare to them? Do they not uſually hinder them from employing their natural capacities and talents, and from becoming as uſeful and deſerving members of ſociety as they might have been?

O ye whom God has bleſſed with children, and who ſo tenderly love your offspring as to be ever afraid they ſhould miſs of anything, bequeath them the invaluable bleſſing that God has annexed to beneficence; leave them the love and the pious wiſhes of the wretched whom you have revived, of the infirm whom you have ſupported, of the innocent whom you have delivered, of the poor whom you have relieved, of the forlorn whom you have adopted, of the orphans who, by your aſſiſtance, have been rendered uſeful members of the community, of the low among the people, whom you, by inſtruc-

tion,

tion, by prudent counſel, by effective ſuccours, have lifted from the duſt; leave them the example of the fear of God, of induſtry, of contentedneſs, of diſcretion, of modeſty, of moderation: ſo may you be far more certain of their future proſperity; ſo may you hereafter part with them with a far more tranquil mind, than if, with the want of theſe advantages, you left them the greateſt treaſures. Theſe treaſures may, as the wiſe man ſays, take to themſelves the wings of an eagle, and quickly forſake them; nay, on the ſlippery path of life they may eaſily overſet them and plunge them into ruin. But that bleſſing of the Lord endures for ever; thoſe pious wiſhes open to them the treaſures of heaven; thoſe poor and mean, thoſe wretched and forlorn, who have ſo much to thank you for, who ſtand indebted to you for their preſervation, or their welfare, will afford them numberleſs agreeable and uſeful ſervices; thoſe examples of virtue and piety will ſecure them from innumerable deviations, and make them wiſe to everlaſting felicity.

Neither let it be ſaid: It is true, it is more bleſſed to give than to receive, but the times are no longer of ſuch a complexion, as to allow us to diſtribute relief with a liberal hand among the poor and neceſſitous. One is obliged to retrench in all manner of ways; we are forced to deny ourſelves a great many conveniencies and pleaſures, which we might otherwiſe have enjoyed without ſcruple; and therefore it is perfectly natural for a man to confine

his liberality to narrower bounds. But, my dear friend, if you are obliged to retrench, and actually do limit yourſelf in all manner of ways and in all reſpects; if you do and are obliged to do this in regard to your table, to your furniture, your cloaths and your pleaſures: we neither will nor can impute it to you as a ſin, if the ſame thing happen, in due proportion, in regard to your alms and your acts of charity. But, if you do this barely, or principally, in this and not in the other reſpects; if you are as profuſe for yourſelf and your family in all, or in the generality of particulars, as your better days allowed you to be, and are only become more frugal and ſparing in regard to the poor and needy: then, my beloved, you undoubtedly commit a crime that no circumſtances of time are able to excuſe. You ſeize on the ſubſtance of the poor, on that portion of what you have in truſt, upon which your leſs proſperous brethren have, both from nature and religion, the moſt righteous claim, and of which you cannot, without cruelty, deprive them. You can no longer be called true and faithful ſtewards of the goods committed to your charge, ſince you employ them ſolely to your own advantage, and not to the benefit of thoſe, whom he to whom they abſolutely belong, has expreſsly recommended to your patronage and relief.

The chriſtian, my friends, who rightfully bears that title, the chriſtian in whoſe ſoul the genuine love of his neighbour abides and prevails, in ſimilar caſes

caſes acts quite otherwiſe. If the circumſtances of the times require him to limit his expenſes: he acquieſces, he does it without reluctance; becauſe he has learnt to be content with his lot, and to be ſatisfied under all events: he begins not however with the poor and needy; he begins with himſelf. He rather curtails himſelf of many ſuperfluous delicacies, many unneceſſary accommodations, many innocent, but merely ſenſual and fugacious pleaſures, than that while he is in the enjoyment of plenty, the wretched, who fly to him as a ſhelter from the ſtorm and a refuge from diſtreſs, ſhould be left to their miſery; and he himſelf be deprived of the godlike pleaſure of relieving them. No, nothing but neceſſity, nothing but actual indigence, can force him to do ſo much violence to his humane and benevolent affections, and to neglect that which has hitherto been his pureſt, his ſupreme delight.

Laſtly, let it not be ſaid: True, it is more bleſſed to give than to receive; but who knows, whether thoſe to whom we give will make the beſt, that they will make a proper uſe of it? Who knows whether the noble inſtitutions we are called upon to ſupport are effectually of that utility we are promiſed will ariſe from them? Who knows whether in times to come they may not be perverted to quite other deſigns? Oh, my friends, in what a lamentable plight ſhould we be, if God, whom we are bound to imitate as his children, were to deal with us according to theſe leſſons of parſimony! Do we always

always employ the bounties of his munificent hand to the ends for which they are beſtowed? Do we manage them ſo carefully, ſo faithfully, ſo conſcientiouſly, as we might and ought to do? Would not numbers, would not the majority, nay, would not all of us, be diveſted of the capacities, the faculties, the goods of fortune, the privileges, we poſſeſs, if God ſhould reſolve to ſtrip us of all that we do not conſtantly employ to the beſt, or even that we at times employ to evil purpoſe? And yet this kind and clement God leaves us theſe capacities, theſe faculties, theſe goods of fortune, theſe privileges; and yet he gives us from day to day freſh tokens of his unwearied beneficence. And ſhould we be ſo much more auſtere with our fellow-creatures, with our brethren, than God is towards us, his creatures and ſubjects? Shall we, merely for fear leſt they ſhould miſemploy our bounty, withhold our hand from doing them good? Shall we leave numbers, languiſhing in miſery without their fault, uncomforted and unrelieved, becauſe there are criminals who deſerve no comfort and no relief? Shall we puniſh the innocent, the upright, at once with the wicked, becauſe we cannot at all times diſtinguiſh the one from the other? Shall we refuſe to ſupport liberal eſtabliſhments and public ſpirited inſtitutions to the utmoſt of our ability, becauſe we have no complete aſſurance, that the views to which they are deſtined will be attained, or that theſe eſtabliſhments will in all future times be conducted on the

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moſt excellent principles? No, my friends, this as chriſtians you will not, you cannot do. Make uſe of a prudent circumſpection in the diſtribution of your bounty; this is your duty. Be obdurate, be inexorable towards thoſe who you know for certain will miſemploy it; this the ſafety and welfare of human ſociety demand. But be not raſh in the judgments you form concerning the deſerts, the ſentiments and views, of the neceſſitous. Be not an auſtere, but a compaſſionate and indulgent cenſor of your brother's conduct; judge him ſo as you may reaſonably deſire that God ſhould judge you. As it is far better that ten guilty ſhould be acquitted, than that one innocent perſon ſhould be condemned; ſo it is likewiſe far better that you ſhould do good to ten undeſerving perſons, than, for the ſake of avoiding this poſſibility, that you ſhould let one worthy ſufferer that applies to you for relief, be ſent away without it. Require not, in fine, that human inſtitutions and eſtabliſhments, ſhould attain to a perfection which perhaps may exceed our human faculties; and refuſe not to promote and encourage things which are good or generally uſeful, becauſe they might perhaps be better and more generally uſeful. Conſider too, that God, whoſe good pleaſure ſhould be always of the utmoſt moment to us, looks more at the pious and chriſtian intention in which we diſtribute our benefactions, than to the effects they actually produce; and that in his retributions, he guides himſelf more by them than he does

does by these. Our good works in numberless instances resemble the seed that lies long concealed in the ground, and which at length shoots upward, and brings forth fruit, though even we may probably have forgot that ever we sowed it. Let us but do our duty; let us do it with cheerfulness and without being weary, and leave the consequences of it to that God who knows and governs all things, and under whose administration no good deed can be done in vain.

Let us then at present, my beloved brethren, make no account of these futile objections that arise from avarice or unseasonable parsimony, but fulfil the sweet and blessed duty of beneficence, according to our utmost abilities, now when I have to recommend to you a contribution towards the erection of work-houses and houses of correction — now, when the foundation of an establishment is to be laid, which many of you, with the greatest reason, have so often wished for, and the utility whereof may extend to all future ages, becoming greater and more various from day to day. And what arguments are wanting to us, my friends, on this occasion, to be liberal, and to lead us to expect from our liberality the most blessed effects? The harder the times, and the dearer provisions may be; the more certain it is that numbers of the poor look out for work in vain, and the more easily may they be allured to unlawful attempts, and to predatory attacks on the public safety: the more undeniable in

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ſhort it is, that wicked or profligate men by painful and ignominious corporal puniſhment uſually become ſtill more wicked and profligate, on the other hand by diſcipline and labour often better; ſo much the more needful are inſtitutions like the preſent, and the leſs ſhould we ſhrink from contributing of what we poſſeſs to the foundation and endowment of them.

The poor, my friends, who from no fault of their own are poor, and would willingly work had they the means and opportunity, moſt certainly compoſe a claſs of ſociety that is entitled to all poſſible conſideration and regard: but alſo thoſe, who by their own inadvertencies, or from the want of a good education, are fallen into poverty, or even by poverty have been betrayed into acts of injuſtice and theft, are not totally unworthy of our care and compaſſion. They may probably be ſtill capable of amendment; they may probably ſtill be made uſeful members of ſociety; they may at leaſt be checked in their diſorderly courſe of life, and be preſerved from yet greater and more heinous enormities. They have like us immortal ſouls that are capable of everlaſting happineſs; and theſe ſouls may be brought to reflection by diſcipline and labour, may be penetrated with remorſe and repentance at the ſight of their ſins and vices, awakened to better and more chriſtian ſentiments, and thus be reſcued from that horrible perdition which awaits the hardened and impenitent ſinner. And ſhall we not

cheerfully

cheerfully do all that in us lies to the promotion of this generous deſign? Wherein can we better employ the goods that God has given us, than in providing for and in reforming ſo many poor and wretched objects, who are ſtill our brethren, both as men and as chriſtians? Indeed, what we are now able to do cannot at once, and probably can never wholly ſupply the various wants of this too numerous claſs of mankind. Indeed, the fruits of the good inſtitutions we are now to promote cannot be ſo remarkably abundant in the firſt years of their foundation. But do not the beſt human regulations and attempts only by degrees attain to their perfection? Muſt we not firſt ſow, before we can reap? May not that, which at its commencement can only be ſerviceable to a few, in the future be uſeful and a bleſſing to thouſands? Would not almoſt every charitable inſtitution, and public ſpirited eſtabliſhment, have ſoon fallen to the ground, if it had not been ſupported from other motives than the complete aſſurance of the beſt effects?

Oh let us then look not only at the preſent, but alſo at the future; and place our perfect confidence in the providence of God, that whatever is good he will certainly proſper. Let us frequently indulge in ſuch animating reflections as theſe: I am now committing good grain to the earth, I am now actuated by the pureſt motives and aiming at the beſt ends, contributing what I can to the maintenance of diſcipline and order; that idleneſs, and the innumerable

numerable miſeries and crimes that grow out of it, may be reſtrained; that the innocent may be reſcued; that the tranſgreſſor may be chaſtened and reformed; that the poor who is in want of bread, or is obliged to acquire it by begging, may find a proper ſupport. What numbers may hereafter bleſs the kind inſtitutions in behalf of which I am now pleading, that his dreadful pains and torture did not quite overwhelm him*, and that his innocence was brought forth as clear as the day. What numbers will owe it to theſe inſtitutions, that they were deterred from the ways of ſin and ruin, or recovered from them; that they were ſnatched from the extreme of miſery and from deſpair; that they found food for their body, and help and deliverance for their ſoul. What proſpects! Who can remain unmoved and cold at the bare idea of the manifold good that may and will ariſe from theſe inſtitutions? What generous, what chriſtian heart will not make it his duty and his joy to contribute what he is able to the realizing of theſe glorious hopes? This is what you will do; I expect it from your chriſtian and beneficent diſpoſitions: and if ye do it heartily and in ſincere intentions, I can confidently promiſe you, in the name of God, who through

* The abolition of the torture throughout the electorate of Saxony in 1771 gave the firſt occaſion to the erection of theſe houſes of correction and work-houſes.

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me is inciting you to beneficence, that you will be acceptable to him, and that he will give you his bleſſing.

Feb. 17, 1771.

SERMON XLII.

The Value of Human Happineſs itſelf.

GOD, eternal, neverfailing ſource of life and happineſs! on us thy children, life and happineſs of various kinds and in rich abundance inceſſantly flow down from thee; and in which we here rejoice before thee; for this we thank thee with united hearts. No, thou haſt not doomed any of thy creatures, any of mankind, to miſery; thou haſt devoted and called them all to happineſs: and even the miſery which our own miſdeeds either have or have not wrought, muſt be and is the means and way to that deſired end. This we are taught by the various diſpoſitions and capacities of our nature; this we learn from thy ſeveral diſpoſals and ſettlements in the material and in the intellectual world; of this we are certified by what thy ſon Jeſus has communicated to us and done for us. Innumerable ſources of pleaſure and delight are daily opened around us, whence we may all draw, and which we never can exhauſt. We daily re-

ceive from thy liberal hand innumerable benefits and bleſſings, demanding of us gratitude and joy. And if ſometimes thoſe ſources of pleaſure are troubled by our tears, and theſe benefits loſe a part of their value to us by ſufferings; yet the agreeable and the good with which thou doſt bleſs and gladden us, retains a great preponderance over the diſagreeable and evil that thou findeſt good to diſpenſe amongſt us. Yes, o bounteous author of our being, love is eſſential to thy nature! Thy will and thy operations tend ſolely to happineſs; and thou doſt will and effect it even when we leaſt think ſo. Thanks and praiſe and adoration ever be to thee, the Allgracious, the Father of men! Happineſs and ſalvation to us and all thy creatures in heaven and on earth! Oh that we were ever more attentive to thy bounties, ever more ſociable in the enjoyment of them, ever more ſatisfied with thy diſpoſals and appointments, ever more faithful and blithe in the uſe of thy benefits. May even now our reflections on theſe important ſubjects ſhed a clear light upon our minds and much ſerenity and joy into our hearts! Bleſs them to theſe ends, o gracious God, and hearken to our prayer through Jeſus Chriſt, our lord, in whoſe name we further addreſs thee, ſaying: Our father, &c.

PSALM CIV. 24.

The earth is full of thy riches.

IT is a matter of great and near concernment, my pious hearers, to know how to form a juſt calculation of human happineſs, or of the ſtock of ſatisfaction and pleaſure, of the ſum of agreeable ſenſations ſubſiſting among mankind. He that makes the amount of it too great, he that looks on the earth as a paradiſe, and the preſent ſtate of man as a ſtate of continued enjoyment, muſt be ſo often and ſo grievouſly deceived in his expectations as to become ill-humoured and impatient. On the other hand, he who overlooks, if not the whole, yet at leaſt the greater part of the various kinds of benefit that are in the world and amongſt mankind, or does not aſcribe to them the value they really deſerve; he that imagines he perceives on all ſides, only imperfection and defect, only miſery and diſtreſs, near and at a diſtance, around him; who ſees as it were tears guſhing from every human eye, and ſighs ariſing from every human breaſt; how can he revere the creator of himſelf and all mankind as the allbountiful parent of the world! How can he rejoice in his exiſtence, and the exiſtence of his fellow-creatures! How enjoy the advantages and benefits, the ſatisfactions and comforts of life, with a grate-

ful and a cheerful heart! And how prejudicial muſt this be to his virtue and piety, to his inward perfection! How negligently at times will he fulfil his duties! How apt will he be to grow languid and weary in acts of juſtice and humanity! We ſhould be on our guard againſt this gloomy and pernicious way of thinking, my pious hearers, as we are deſirous of having the conſcious enjoyment of life and punctually anſwering its ſeveral obligations. Let us not charge God, the beſt, the moſt beneficent being, the father of mankind, with being deficient in kindneſs. Let us not ſhut our eyes and our hearts to the beautiful and good that is diffuſed throughout the world and diſtributed among mankind, nor miſapply our diſcernment to the diſparagement of it. Let us appretiate human happineſs for what it actually is, neither thinking too meanly nor too highly of it; and in the ſentiment of its copiouſneſs and magnitude exclaim with the pſalmiſt in our text: The earth is full of thy riches. Indeed it is difficult, it is even impoſſible, exactly to poize the ſatisfaction and the diſguſt, the pleaſure and the pain, the happineſs and the miſery, which ſubſiſt among mankind, againſt each other, ſo as to obtain the juſt amount of either. This can only be done by that eternal majeſty who weighed the world's foundations, who holds in his hand the balance of both, who proportions them among his creatures according to his wiſe and good pleaſure, who comprehends them both in his al-

mighty

mighty mind, and perceives all their poſſible and actual effects in every event. We may however form a juſter eſtimate of human happineſs than is uſually done. We may ſurvey it on many ſides but little noticed, and direct our attention to many collateral circumſtances and things which we probably have hitherto overlooked. And this is the deſign of my preſent diſcourſe. I would offer you a few ſuggeſtions on the proper valuation of human happineſs. To this end I ſhall do two things: firſt, lay before you ſome conſiderations on the nature and magnitude of human happineſs in general; and then deliver you a few rules for rightly appretiating it in particular inſtances.

There unqueſtionably is happineſs among mankind. Of this our own experience, of this what we ſee and obſerve in regard to others, will not permit us to harbour a doubt. For, how can we refuſe to ſay, We and other men have various agreeable conceptions and ſenſations; we ſee, hear, feel, think and perform many things with ſatisfaction and delight; we and others frequently enjoy pleaſure and mirth; we and others are often contented with our condition, and we are comfortable in the conſciouſneſs and contemplation of it? And is not all this collectively happineſs?

Indeed human happineſs is not unalloyed; it is not perfectly pure. Not one of us all poſſeſſes purely agreeable conceptions and ſenſations; no one enjoys pure pleaſure and ſatisfaction; no one

is perfectly and at all times ſatisfied with whatever he is and does, and with whatever befalls him; no one experiences purely deſirable occurrences. To every perſon is diſtributed his meaſure of diſlike, of diſpleaſure and pain from adverſe events. Every one muſt taſte of the cup of ſorrow as well as of the goblet of joy. Even the generality of our agreeable ideas and ſenſations are daſhed and adulterated with a greater or leſs mixture of ingredients that are diſtaſteful and bitter. But this is the neceſſary and unavoidable conſequence of our nature, and the preſent ſettlement and condition of things; and ſo muſt it be, unleſs it were proper for man to be faſcinated with proſperity and intoxicated with joy.

As human happineſs is not unalloyed, ſo neither is it uninterrupted. It does not fill up each day, each hour, each moment of our earthly exiſtence. As light and darkneſs alternately ſucceed each other in the natural world, ſo likewiſe in the moral, but much ſeldomer, bad days ſucceed to good, and miſery to happineſs. Pleaſure and pain, joys and ſorrows, tread very cloſely on each other; often ſuddenly interchange, and often ariſe from each other. Exceſſive pleaſure becomes pain; immoderate joy turns into ſorrow; ſuper-abundant proſperity is frequently overwhelming. Our habitudes and relations with outward objects, their relation to us, and their influences upon us, are not always the ſame, may to-morrow be quite different from what

what they yeſterday were; and theſe very objects are all fluctuating, tranſitory, evaneſcent. So far as our happineſs is built on external objects, ſo far muſt it be frequently interrupted. And even in ourſelves, in our opinions and manners, in our own mutability, are cauſes already ſufficient to prevent its conſiſting in a ſteady, firm, and linked ſeries of purely agreeable ideas and ſenſations.

Human happineſs is thirdly not equally great to all men, and cannot be ſo. All cannot inhabit the ſame zone, and enjoy the ſame natural goods and amenities; all cannot have the ſame education, be inveſted with the ſame ſtation, carry on the ſame buſineſs, or attain to the ſame degree of politeneſs and intelligence. All have not the ſame native diſpoſition and capacity for purſuing, for finding and for enjoying, a certain greater proportion, or certain nobler kinds of happineſs; as all have not the ſame attentive, correct underſtanding, the ſame cultivated and refined taſte, the ſame ſuſceptible and participating heart. All finally do not conduct themſelves in the ſame manner; and but too many think and act in ſuch a way as though they were determined by no means to be happy, but ever to become more wretched. As great therefore as is the diverſity in all theſe circumſtances and things, ſo great muſt likewiſe be the diverſity in the allotment of happineſs among mankind.

But even the ſame perſon is not always equally ſenſible to the happineſs allotted him, nor always

alike ſatisfied with it. Time and enjoyment but too often quell the ſentiment of the goods we poſſeſs. Little uneaſineſſes and vexations not unfrequently deprive all the advantages and comforts we have in our power of their value. And then neither our body nor our mind is conſtantly attuned to the ſame lively and vigorous ſenſations, as to enable us to enjoy, with conſciouſneſs to enjoy, the beautiful and the good within us and without us, at all times alike. In this reſpect all depends either on the degree of our natural ſenſibility, or on the particular humour and temper of mind in which we are at the time.

But, my pious hearers, though human happineſs be neither unmingled nor uninterrupted nor equally great, for every man, nor even for its poſſeſſor equally ſenſible and ſatisfying at all times; yet it is ſtill real; it is manifold; it is great, abundantly great; it is capable of a conſtantly progreſſive augmentation. Four particulars that will place its nature and value in a clear point of view.

It is real. Human happineſs is not fancy, not impoſture, not ſelf-deceit. It is founded on ideas and ſenſations, of which we are as poſitively and intimately conſcious as we are of our exiſtence and our life; and if theſe ideas and ſenſations are agreeable, if they occaſion us ſatisfaction and pleaſure, then no man will make it a matter of diſpute, that it is well with us, that we are more or leſs happy. And where is he that has not had, that has

has not frequently had ſuch ideas and ſenſations, and has not felt himſelf happy in the conſciouſneſs of them? Human happineſs will alſo ſtand the teſt of reflection and conſideration. It is not the work of deception, not an agreeable dream, that on our waking vaniſhes away. It does not ſhun ſerenity and ſilence, willingly takes reaſon for its companion, and always remains what it was erewhile. Nay, then firſt does it appear to the man of reflection and feeling, in its full capacity and its real magnitude. Recount, o man, recount, in ſome calm and tranquil hour of life, all the benefits thou poſſeſſeſt, and which endow thy mind, thy perſon, and thy outward ſtation; all the advantages in temporals and ſpirituals thou haſt, and mayſt acquire; all the pleaſures and delights thou enjoyeſt and art capable of enjoying; all the good that is in thee, and is effectuated through thee; all the proſpects into a better futurity that lie open before thee: reckon all theſe together, examine them as ſtrictly and impartially as thou wilt; aſk thyſelf whether theſe benefits are not real benefits, theſe advantages not real advantages, theſe pleaſures and delights not real pleaſures and delights, this good not actually good, theſe proſpects not deſirable and conſoling; and if thou canſt not deny it, then it remains clear, that the happineſs flowing from them is real happineſs.

No leſs diverſified is human happineſs, my pious hearers, than it is real. It is as diverſified as the neceſſities, the capacities, the inclinations, the behaviour,

haviour, the ſituation, the circumſtances, of mankind require. A thouſand kinds of benefit and advantage are common to us all; a thouſand ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure ſtand open to us all. Are we not all enlightened by the ſame ſun? Are we not all cheered by its light and its heat? Are not the beauties of nature diſplayed before us all in their ſplendour and glory? Are we not all tranſported with the view of them, when we regard and obſerve them? Does not everything that lives and moves inſpire us with joy, when we open our ears and our hearts to its voice. Does not everything elevate our mind to the creator and father of the univerſe, and invite us to praiſe him as the Allbountiful? Do we not all find the moſt agreeable, moſt delicious taſte in the food and the drinks which his providence has granted us for our ſuſtenance and refreſhment? Are we not ſuſceptible of numberleſs agreeable impreſſions and feelings from the organs of ſenſe? Are not thouſands and thouſands of the creatures of the univerſe ſubſervient to us all? Are not earth, water, air, fire, are not all the powers of nature devoted to our welfare, and employed in the advancement of it? Are we not all a thouſand times gladdened by the indulgent ſky, the mild refreſhing breeze, the field cloathed with food and ſmiling with plenty, the tree fragrant with bloſſoms or laden with fruits, the ſhady foreſt, the limpid ſtream, the riſing joy of every living thing? And how variegated is the pleaſure that we all enjoy!

joy! Do we not all enjoy the pleaſure of life, and of free and voluntary motion; the pleaſure of thought and conſideration, of inveſtigation and diſcovery; the pleaſure of labour and of reſt; of prudent deſigns, and of their ſucceſsful execution; the pleaſure of the retired enjoyment of ourſelves, and of ſocial converſe with others; the pleaſure of received or afforded aſſiſtance; the pleaſure of cautiouſly avoided or of heroically conquered danger; the pleaſure of love and of friendſhip; the pleaſure of rational piety and devotion? What founts of happineſs! How different, and yet how rich and common! From whom are they totally debarred? What man has not uſed them? Who may not daily draw from theſe fountains of pleaſure? And how various muſt the happineſs be that is daily drawn from them! — Does not each age, each ſex, each ſtation, each courſe of life, each office, each connection; does not every ſeaſon of the year, every climate, every country, every greater or ſmaller ſociety, derive from them its peculiar advantages, pleaſures and joys, its own ſources of agreeable ſenſations, of happineſs? And who, amid this diverſity of ſources and means of pleaſure and good, need go empty away? Who, but by his own fault, can be wholly unhappy? No, Lord, the earth is full of thy riches!

If human happineſs be various, my pious hearers, ſo likewiſe is it great, abundantly great. Great in a view to the multitude of agreeable ſenſations; great

great in regard of the vivacity and ſtrength, as well as of the continuance of them. Who can enumerate the agreeable ideas and ſenſations, which only one man has in one year, which only one man has in the whole courſe of his life? Who is able to reckon up the multitude of agreeable ideas and ſenſations which at once exiſt in all the living in every hour, in every moment. To what a ſum of happineſs muſt the whole reſult amount! And how often do theſe ſenſations proceed to tranſport! How often do they burſt forth in tears of joy, in hearty mirth, in ſhouts of jubilation! And how often do whole years, and ſtill longer periods of life, glide away in calm ſatisfaction to a man, wherein he conſtantly feels pleaſed with his exiſtence, and finds no cauſe of diſſatisfaction or complaint! Indeed at the ſame time thouſand ſorts of unpleaſant ideas and ſenſations take place among mankind; indeed at the ſame time the tears of pain and ſorrow are flowing from a thouſand and a thouſand eyes; but if this ſeem to diminiſh the bulk of human happineſs, yet does it not remove it; it ſtill remains not only great, but preponderatively great. Where is the man, who, in the aggregate, has had more diſagreeable than agreeable ideas and ſenſations, that has experienced more pain than pleaſure? And if there be ſuch perſons, how ſmall is their number in compariſon with the number of thoſe that have had the contrary to rejoice in! No, the preponderance of happineſs above that of miſery is great; and that as

ſurely

ſurely as that there is more life than death, more health than ſickneſs, more ſuperfluity and ſatiety than hunger and want, more free and unimpeded exertion of mental and bodily powers than total inaction or painful reſtriction of them, more love than hatred, more hope than fear, more deſire for prolongation of life than for its abbreviation, amongſt mankind! No, for one diſmal hour we paſs in ſighs, we may ſerenely and cheerfully live an hundred; for one tear extorted by pain, we may ſhed a thouſand tears of generous ſenſibility, or of ſedate and pious joy: for one misfortune that happens to us, a thouſand known and unknown benefits fall to our lot.

Laſtly, my pious hearers, human happineſs is capable of an always progreſſive increaſe. And this exceedingly enhances its worth; this puts all complaint of ſhort ſorrows and tranſient miſery to ſilence. Human happineſs is not confined to the narrow limits of this life; it is immortal, like the man that enjoys it. The happineſs we here enjoy, enjoy as rational and good beings, is the path to ſtill purer and higher happineſs in a better world; and the enjoyment of that capacitates us for the enjoyment of this purer and ſuperior happineſs. Let therefore human happineſs be never ſo much alloyed at preſent, never ſo much interrupted, never ſo much circumſcribed, what an importance, what a ſweetneſs muſt it receive from the proſpect of its never ceaſing, but always continuing, always improving, always becoming

becoming greater and more perfect, and at length totally vanquiſhing all evil and miſery!

Theſe, my pious hearers, are the general conceptions which reaſon and experience give us of the nature and magnitude of human happineſs. Allow me to ſubjoin a few rules for rightly appretiating and judging of it in particular caſes, or in regard to particular perſons.

Wouldſt thou then, my chriſtian brother, wouldſt thou juſtly decide on the value of human happineſs in particular caſes, and poize it againſt human miſery; confound not proſperity and happineſs together. Argue not from the defect of the one to the want of the other. That is far more rare than this: that conſiſts in outward advantages and goods that adorn us, and are ſometimes beneficial to us and ſometimes hurtful; this, in ideas of the mind and ſenſations of the heart, which procure us ſatisfaction and pleaſure; that is not in our power, this depends greatly on ourſelves: either may ſubſiſt independently on the other, they are often divided aſunder; and as proſperity is not always attended by happineſs, ſo neither is the former a neceſſary requiſite of the latter. Indeed, if only the rich, the eminent, the great, the mighty, only ſuch as are ſurrounded by ſplendour and opulence, only them that fare ſumptuouſly every day, and paſs their lives in tumultuous pleaſures, are to be and to be accounted happy, then wilt thou find but little happineſs amongſt the ſons of men; for comparatively but few can be rich and

and eminent and great and mighty; but few can diſtinguiſh themſelves from others by pomp and ſplendour, or by a luxurious and voluptuous life. If however there be but few ſuch darlings of fortune, then are there ſo many more happy, ſo many more cheerful and contented perſons; and whom thou mayſt find in every ſtation, among all the claſſes of mankind; whom thou mayſt and wilt very often find in the meaneſt cottage of the countryman, in the unornamented habitation of the artificer, not unfrequently in the tattered garb of poverty, and even under the ſqualid appearance of woe.

Wouldſt thou farther judge rightly of human happineſs in particular inſtances; take as much care on the other hand not to account misfortune and unhappineſs as one and the ſame, or always, from the preſence of the one, to conclude on the preſence of the other. No, misfortune does not always imply, does not with wiſe and good perſons imply unhappineſs; and our heavenly father, who has ordained us to happineſs, has ſo conſtituted our nature and the nature of things, that we may experience much misfortune and yet be happy, and ſtill rejoice in his bounty and in our preſent and future exiſtence. Let it be, that, by untoward events, I ſuffer loſs in my competence, in my outward diſtinctions, in my health, in my fame, that ſome ſources of my pleaſure fail, that my friends and intimates forſake me; let it be, that all this ſhakes the ſtem of my happi-

neſs,

neſs, that it weakens and brings it to the ground; is it therefore wholly and for ever deſtroyed and overthrown? May it not ſtill, like the tree which has been bent by the ſtorm to the earth, lift up its head again, and again be rich in bloſſoms and fruits, when the tempeſt is over and gone, and ſerenity and peace are once more reſtored? Have I, then, by theſe adverſe events, loſt all the agreeable ideas and ſenſations I formerly had? With theſe outward goods and advantages, am I then likewiſe deſpoiled of my inward ſpiritual perfection, and the conſciouſneſs of what I am and ſhall hereafter be? Are then my habitudes and relations to God and the future world, which afforded me ſo much comfort and repoſe, diſſolved? Do not then a thouſand other ſources of ſatisfaction and joy ſtill ſtand open to me? Do not time and reflection and buſineſs heal the moſt painful wounds inflicted by misfortune? Beware then of ſuppoſing every unfortunate man to be unhappy! Misfortune is tranſitory: happineſs can ſuſtain a thouſand attacks of it, ere it be torn from the ſpot where it has once taken root. On the ſame principle, beware too of always ſuppoſing trouble and miſery to be wherever thou ſeeſt tears to flow. They flow as often, probably oftener, from ſources of delight as of pain; and we have commonly mingled ſenſations, in which the diſagreeable is far over-balanced by the pleaſant; ſenſations which oftentimes ariſe from the moſt cordial emotions of benevolence and affection

to the human race, of virtue and greatneſs of mind, and not unfrequently are connected with grateful, enchanting recollections of bleſſings already enjoyed, and with the moſt delightful proſpects of future bliſs.

Wouldſt thou thirdly, my chriſtian brother, judge rightly of human happineſs in particular caſes, and in regard of particular perſons, and not overlook the greater proportion of it; dwell not entirely, not principally on the extraordinary, the ſhining kinds and ſcenes of happineſs, which attract the eye of every beholder, — they are not indeed extremely frequent in the world, — but take likewiſe and rather into conſideration, the placid, domeſtic pleaſures and joys which lie concealed from the view. Bring into the account the permanent advantages and benefits a man enjoys, though becauſe of their very permanency, they excite in him no very ſtrong emotions of joy and delight. Seldom indeed can we enjoy the lively pleaſure of returning health and of prolonged life; but daily the calmer pleaſure of the uninterrupted continuance of both. Seldom indeed are we able to bring great matters to effect, rarely to taſte the delight of being the benefactor and the redeemer of our brother; but daily may we ſoothe and ſolace ourſelves in the reflection on having performed ſomething good and uſeful in our ſtation and calling. Rarely indeed can we accompliſh ſuch remarkable and deſirable alterations in our condition, as ſhall fill us with a peculiar and

hitherto unknown delight; but daily may we enjoy the innumerable ſatisfactions and advantages of it. Seldom can we perhaps partake of public diverſions, more rarely approach the bright and dazzling luſtre of a court, or take poſſeſſion of a large eſtate; but daily may we enjoy the pleaſures of domeſtic life, of familiar intercourſe, and the friendly converſation of our family, walk daily in the genial light which peace and contentment ſhed around us. Seldom perhaps does our devotion kindle into tranſport; but daily may it procure us conſolation and acquieſcence and tranquil joy. And is only that, is not this likewiſe happineſs? Shall the good and the agreeable that we may ſo often, that we may daily enjoy, loſe its value for the very reaſon that it ſo often, that it daily procures us ſatisfaction and pleaſure? Ought not this circumſtance to render it ſo much the more precious to us? Does it not therefore contribute ſo much the more to the ſum of our agreeable ideas and feelings, and therefore to our happineſs?

Wouldſt thou fourthly, my chriſtian brother, properly appretiate and rightly judge of human happineſs, and that eſpecially in regard of particular caſes and perſons; conſider man not merely as a ſenſual, but likewiſe as an intelligent and moral creature, and take alſo into the account the benefits, the advantages, the pleaſures, he enjoys as ſuch. Or have we only then agreeable ideas and ſenſations, are we happy only then, when our ſenſes procure

procure us pleaſure and delight, when our appetites are flattered, when our animal cravings are ſatisfied, when we feel and enjoy the value of health, of bodily ſtrength, of riches, of outward feſtivity? Are we not as much, and more ſo, as often as we apply our mental faculties with conſciouſneſs, and not without ſucceſsful effects; as often as we meditate on important matters, or matters we hold to be important; as often as we diſcover any traces of truth; as often as we adjuſt or increaſe our knowledge of whatever kind? Are we not alſo happy as often as we apprehend the dignity of our nature, the grandeur of our deſtination, our bleſſed connections with the deity; as often as we maintain, like rational free agents, the dominion over ourſelves, and over the things that are without us; as often as we thence obtain a victory over evil; as often as we obſerve that we are drawing nearer to chriſtian perfection? Are we not ſo, as often as we form a good deſign, or bring it to effect; as often as we are actuated by benevolence and affection towards others; as often as we are employed in beneficence; as often as we have completed ſome uſeful work, or faithfully diſcharged our duty? Are we not ſo even then when we ſacrifice ſomething to duty and to virtue, or to the common intereſt; when we bear and ſuffer for others from magnanimity or friendſhip; when we endure adverſity and misfortunes with fortitude, and become wiſer and better by them; in the ſentiment of progreſſive

virtue and approving heaven? Oh, how much more contented, how much more happy is oftentimes the obſcure, but reflecting and virtuous moraliſt, the ſuffering but pious chriſtian, than the opulent and dignified voluptuary, who is all fleſh, and knows no other pleaſures than what his ſenſes procure him! How much more real and laſting pleaſure does often one hour of calm and luminous contemplation on ſerious ſubjects, and the ſedate enjoyment of our mental powers, afford us, than whole days of noiſy and tumultuous mirth! How much more does one generous or goodnatured act contribute to our ſatisfaction, than a round of tranſient ſenſual amuſements! And yet how ſeldom are theſe purer pleaſures, theſe ſublimer joys, brought into the account, in taking eſtimates of human happineſs!

Wouldſt thou laſtly, o man, calculate properly thy own and thy brother's happineſs; conſider the human creature not barely in certain epochas or times, but in the whole capacity of his life and fortunes. Connect the paſt, the preſent and the future, ſo together in thy thoughts, as in the nature of things they are connected together. If this or that period of the life of a man appears cloudy and dark, another will caſt more light upon it, and evince more happineſs enjoyed. The firſt entrance on buſineſs, on active life, is generally difficult and laborious, and its progreſs brings ſatisfaction and pleaſure. Sometimes youth, ſometimes manhood,

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is wealthier in happineſs. Oftentimes there is more enjoyment in this life, often more qualification and preparation for future enjoyment. Wouldſt thou aſcertain the ſum of thy own or thy brother's happineſs; ſet all theſe againſt each other, reckon all agreeable and cheerful ſenſations together, the innocent ſportive delights of childhood, the livelier joys of youth, the more rational, nobler pleaſures of the mature and advanced age. Think on all thou haſt enjoyed and art ſtill enjoying of agreeable and good, and alſo what thou mayſt hope to enjoy in future; on all that thou art and haſt and doſt, that is good and profitable, and that thou mayſt and wilt be and have and do in all ſucceeding times. Forget not that thou art immortal, that thou art ordained to everlaſting happineſs, that thou art already happy in hope; and, from the firſt-fruits, conclude of the full harveſt; from the ſweets of the foretaſte, of the deliciouſneſs of complete fruition. Theſe rules will guide thee ſafely in appretiating human happineſs, and enable thee to perceive its true nature and magnitude.

On the whole, my chriſtian brother, conclude, that man was not made for miſery by his creator and father, but was formed for happineſs: that to this end he is endowed with diſpoſitions and capacities for it; that he finds in himſelf and without him the moſt various and abundant ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure; and that it is almoſt always his own fault when he does not draw from them ſatiſ-

faction and joy. Farther conclude, that human happineſs is no inſignificant, contemptible matter, as the unfortunate and the melancholy at times repreſent it to be, that none but the miſanthropiſt can wholly be blind to it, none but the inconſiderate and thoughtleſs can hold it for a trifling object. And aſſuredly conclude, that there is far, far more agreeable than diſagreeable ſenſation, far more happineſs than miſery among mankind, far, far more good than evil in the world. In fine, exalt this comfortable idea by the juſt and grand ſentiment; that in the kingdom of God, the God of love, happineſs will always abide, and be augmenting and ſpreading; and that on the other hand, miſery will be ever diminiſhing and at length entirely ceaſe, and be ſucceeded by perfection and bliſs. So wilt thou think worthily of God, and juſtly of the ſtate and deſtination of man. So wilt thou be always cheerful in the preſent life, and be conſtantly more fitted for the future.

SERMON XLIII.

Settlement of our Notions concerning human Happineſs.

GOD, eternal, inexhauſtible fountain of life, of joy, of happineſs! from thee flow life and joy and happineſs on every part of thy immenſe creation. Whatever thou, Allgracious, haſt created, thou haſt formed for happineſs, and thy wiſdom never fails of its ends. However various the methods by which thou leadeſt thy creatures to their deſtination, they by one way or another, ſooner or later, infallibly reach it. Us too, thy children on earth, haſt thou, our merciful Father, deſtined to happineſs, made us ſuſceptible of it, and pointed out and opened to us numerous and exuberant ſources both within us and without us, from which we may draw ſatisfaction and pleaſure. To none of us all are theſe ſources entirely ſhut, none draw from them in vain. Might we but ſeek our happineſs there alone where it is really to be found, and as thankfully, as cheerfully enjoy, and as properly uſe that portion of it which thou haſt decreed to

each of us, as is neceſſary to thy views and to our welfare! Might we be continually acquiring juſter notions of human happineſs and of the way that leads to it, and learning better how to diſtinguiſh it from ſemblance and deception, and with ever greater circumſpection be walking that way! Might we even now, that we are about to meditate on theſe matters, purſue our reflections with that ſerioufneſs and attention which the importance of the ſubject demands. Enlighten us by thy light, and guide us by thy holy ſpirit. Let thy truth diſpel our prejudices and errors, and grant that we may obediently follow its directions and precepts. Oh hearken to our ſupplications, which we preſent unto thee in the name of our lord and ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt, repoſing our entire confidence in his promiſes, and further invoking thee in his words: Our father, &c.

LUKE, xii. 15.

A man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth.

EVERY living and thinking creature, my pious hearers, is panting in the purſuit of happineſs, the child and the youth, as well as the ripened man and the hoary head, the rough uncultivated man of nature and the more civilized and poliſhed member of ſociety, the ignorant as well as the learned, the volatile

volatile as well as the grave, he who has reflected on happineſs and explored its various ſources, as well as he to whom both the term and the idea are alike unknown and ſtrange. Every one is deſirous to rejoice in the life and the faculties which he feels within him; every one to enjoy as much property, as many accommodations and pleaſures, as he knows and can acquire; every one abhors and ſhuns all diſagreeable, painful ideas and feelings; every one wiſhes to augment the ſum as well as the vivacity and force of his agreeable ideas and feelings. If the one acts with conſciouſneſs and conſideration; the other, in the ſame purſuit, follows merely an inward irreſiſtible inſtinct, an obſcure ſenſation. If the one acts upon principles and determinate views; the other ſuffers himſelf to be blindly led by the impreſſions and colliſions of outward things, or by his ſenſual animal feelings. All run after the ſame object: but the ways they ſtrike into to that end, tend very far aſunder. None even entirely miſs of their purpoſe: but moſt of them attain to it along very toilſome roads, after long and dangerous deviations, after many vexatious diſappointments; attain to it only late, only very imperfectly, and pains and ſorrows mark moſt of the ſteps they have made.

But, ſince the longing and the endeavouring after happineſs is ſo natural to man, and is ſo intimately blended with all that he thinks and wills and does; it is undoubtedly of the utmoſt moment, that he ſhould give them the proper direction; that direction

tion whereby he may the moſt certainly, the moſt ſafely, the moſt completely accompliſh his deſire. Whoever is once arrived at that ſtage of human culture that he can reflect on happineſs and miſery, and on the means and ſources of it, and is frequently and cogently ſummoned to reflect upon them, ſhould not ſatisfy himſelf with obſcure and confuſed ideas on theſe ſubjects. Otherwiſe he would be ſtill farther from the mark than his unenlightened, entirely ſenſual brother. He ſhould rather ſtrive to adjuſt and always more accurately to adjuſt and to determine his ideas on this important matter. We, my pious hearers, we are at that ſtage of civilization: as perſons who are acquainted with their intellectual faculties and underſtand the uſe of them; and as chriſtians, who have a ſuperior light to enlighten and to guide them on the way of truth. Let us aſſert our privileges by forming to ourſelves juſt conceptions of human happineſs. This is the deſign of my preſent diſcourſe.

A man's life, ſays Jeſus in our text, conſiſts not in, no man lives, no man is rendered happy, by the abundance of his poſſeſſions. This expreſſion of our divine teacher points out to us the track by which we are to ſeek, or not to ſeek our happineſs. Let us purſue this track by circumſtantially inquiring wherein our happineſs conſiſts or does not conſiſt, and by what way we may moſt ſurely arrive at it. Subjects of reflection certainly meriting our utmoſt attention and our moſt cordial participation.

A man's

A man's life conſiſts not in the abundance of his poſſeſſions; therefore, human happineſs conſiſts not in the poſſeſſion of outward endowments and advantages, not in wealth and affluence, not in elevation and power, not in thoſe things that mankind reckon worldly proſperity. Experience teaches us that a man may have all theſe things, that he may poſſeſs them in an ample, a ſuperfluous degree, and yet be unhappy; and that on the other hand he may be deſtitute of all or of the greateſt part of theſe things, and yet be happy. Or, are all, are even moſt of the rich and great and powerful happy? Are they content, pleaſed, ſatisfied? Are they truly comfortable in what they have and poſſeſs? Do they find in the uſe and enjoyment of it, all that they hoped and expected from it? Do they enjoy it without apprehenſions and without cares? Do theſe advantages ſhield them from all the troubles and vexations of life, from pains and ſickneſſes, from the effects of envy and jealouſy, from the pernicious violence of irregular and deſtructive paſſions? Are not their wants very often only ſo much the more numerous and great, their deſires and appetites the more violent and inſatiable, in proportion as they have more means and opportunities to comply with them, and to hearken to their impetuous cravings? Does not frequently their dependence on others, their ſervitude, their actual ſlavery, increaſe in proportion as they want more things and perſons to the gratification of their deſires and to the execution of

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their projects? On the other hand, are all thoſe unhappy, who live in an inferior ſtation, who are deſtitute of the goods of fortune and outward advantages? Are all, are many of the ſources of pleaſure, ſhut up againſt them? Are peace of mind, ſatisfaction, joy unknown and foreign to them? Do they not frequently enjoy them in a far ſuperior degree, far more careleſsly and freely, than thoſe pretended favourites of fortune? Does not the lowlineſs and obſcurity of their ſtation ſecure them from a thouſand dangers and troubles? Have they not all that nature and religion offer to the man and the chriſtian, in common with the rich and the mighty? Is not generally their taſte leſs vitiated, and their ſenſibility ſtronger and more lively? Is not their happineſs dependent on much fewer accidental and tranſient objects? Cannot a man very often be far more blithe in himſelf and his exiſtence, in ſilence and in ſolitude than in noiſe and tumult? No, my dear friends, outward welfare, wealth, ſuperfluity, elevation, power, pomp and ſplendour may in themſelves conſiſt with happineſs; they do not always exclude it; they have a tendency rather, when rightly eſtimated and uſed as ſubordinate means, to promote it: but they form no neceſſary, no eſſential part of it. The abſence of them is not always, is not in moſt caſes, attended by the want of happineſs. This can very well ſubſiſt without them, it is ſeen very often without them. Of this neither reflection nor obſervation will allow us to doubt. A

man's

man's life conſiſts not in the abundance of the things that he poſſeſſes.

Juſt as little neceſſary is it to human happineſs, my pious hearers, that all our undertakings ſhould ſucceed, that all our plans and deſigns ſhould be accompliſhed, all our wiſhes be fulfilled, all our deſires be gratified. Our deſires are but too often ſordid and corrupt, our wiſhes fooliſh, our plans and deſigns injurious to ourſelves and others, our undertakings unjuſt, or unreaſonable, or impracticable. Were it not for the various bounds preſcribed us by the nature and the courſe of things and by the over-ruling providence of God, there would certainly be far more pain and ſuffering, more grief and miſery among mortals; and never would creatures who ſee no farther than we do be more unhappy than if all went with them according to their wiſhes. Were it not for the numerous obſtacles and difficulties that we meet with in the world, were it not for the oppoſition that checks us on all ſides, and forces us to reflection and conſideration, were it not for the painful experiments we ſo frequently make of our weakneſs, of our temerity, of our ignorance and folly, and of the facility with which we err and are deceived, we ſhould never become intelligent and wiſe, never rightly judge of our faculties and capacities, and never uſe them in the beſt manner, never diſtinguiſh between ſemblance and reality, the ſhadow and the ſubſtance, and conſequently never learn to

build

build our happineſs on a firm and durable foundation. No, even unſucceſsful attempts and purſuits, even fruſtrated plans and deſigns, even unaccompliſhed wiſhes and ungratified deſires may well conſiſt with human happineſs. By that means many greater and more continued evils and pains, injuries and deceptions are removed or averted from us. By that means we are exerciſed in the uſe and application of our faculties in the moſt diverſified manner, and they acquire a more direct and ſettled application. By that means our reaſon is ever gaining a completer maſtery and authority over our ſenſuality, and at every ſtep by which we approach towards perfection we at the ſame time approach towards happineſs. By that means in ſhort we learn better to underſtand the object we are in purſuit of and the way that leads to it, and more circumſpectly and cautiouſly to walk that way.

Hence it follows, that human happineſs cannot conſiſt in a ſtate of purely agreeable ideas and ſenſations, much leſs in the enjoyment of merely rapturous delight and lively pleaſure. Both the one and the other would be manifeſtly at variance with our nature, and with the nature of the other things that ſurround us and with which we are in connection. A body, formed of duſt, deſtructible in its nature, which is ſo liable to injury, to harm, to diſſolution; a place of abode that is ſubject to ſo many alterations and viciſſitudes, on which all is unſtable, all as it were in a perpetual ebb and flow;

a mind

a mind that with regard to perceptions and faculties is ſo limited, which ſo often miſtakes and errs, and whoſe operations depend in ſo many reſpects on that earthly and frail body; a life that has ſuch a variety of wants and impoſes on us ſo many duties which we cannot adequately perform without great pains and toil; a ſociety of perſons, in ſhort, who are as limited, as weak and frail as ourſelves: all this renders it utterly impoſſible that we could have none but agreeable ideas and ſenſations, or could endure a ſtate of uninterrupted, continual, extatic pleaſure, if it were even poſſible. We ourſelves and all the objects that ſurround us muſt be quite otherwiſe conſtituted: we muſt not be men, the place of our abode muſt not be the earth, our goods and poſſeſſions muſt not be tranſitory, our perceptions and faculties muſt be far greater and more independent, for rendering ſuch a ſtate conceivable. And whoever ſhould think that to be human happineſs and run after it, would deceive himſelf, and purſue a fantom which he could never graſp.

No, my pious hearers, human happineſs, ſummarily to recapitulate what has been ſaid, human happineſs depends rather on what we ourſelves are, what we think, feel and will, than on what is without us, or what we poſſeſs of outward endowments and privileges: it depends rather on the uſe and the application of our faculties themſelves and on the method in which we uſe and apply them, than on thoſe things that we attempt and achieve by them:

them: and it conſiſts in the preponderance of our agreeable ideas and ſenſations over the diſagreeable. If order and tranquillity prevail within us, in our ſentiments and feelings, in our appetites and affections, no kind of diſorder and diſſention from without can make us really unhappy; though they may diminiſh and diſturb our pleaſure: if by the application of our faculties we exerciſe and expand them, and do ſo with conſciouſneſs and conſideration, we feel that we are thus becoming more intelligent, more expert, more perfect, that we are proceeding from one ſtep of culture to another, and this ſentiment muſt procure us delight, even when we do not produce the alterations without us, to the production whereof we applied our faculties in each particular caſe: if in ſhort we experience and enjoy more good than evil; are oftener able than unable to employ our faculties; find more opportunities and means than obſtacles and oppoſition to our improvement and perfection; and have more cauſes for being ſatisfied than diſſatisfied with ourſelves and our condition, then our agreeable ideas and ſenſations thus gain the preponderance over the diſagreeable, and the more remarkable this preponderance is, ſo much the greater and more complete is the human happineſs as it can be here on earth enjoyed. As various and different as the ſum and the vivacity and ſtrength of agreeable and diſagreeable ideas and ſenſations are in human ſouls; ſo various and different are alſo the

degrees

degrees of happineſs which they enjoy. Perfectly pure and unalloyed happineſs is peculiar to the moſt perfect mind alone. The greater the diſtance of any kind and claſs of beings from this ſupreme perfection; ſo much the greater is alſo the mixture of the good and the evil, the agreeable and the diſagreeable in their condition and in the ideas and ſenſations which they have. Human happineſs is therefore not outward proſperity, not the accompliſhment of all our wiſhes and deſigns, not the uninterrupted enjoyment of pleaſure and delight, but a ſtate that procures us more ſatisfaction than diſſatisfaction, more pleaſure than diſcomfort, more agreeable than diſagreeable ideas and ſenſations.

And how ariſes, whereon is grounded this preponderance of the good over the evil, the agreeable over the diſagreeable in human ſouls? On what therefore reſts their happineſs? It is grounded and it reſts on wiſdom, on virtue, on piety. Theſe, my dear friends, are the three principal and moſt abundant ſources of human happineſs. Let us approach theſe ſources, more circumſtantially obſerve their ſalutary efficacies, and ſee in what connection they ſtand with our happineſs and what influence they have upon it.

The firſt ſource, the firſt ground of human happineſs is wiſdom: the right uſe of the underſtanding and the proper application of it to all the occurrences, buſineſſes, privileges and endowments, joys and ſorrows of this life. This wiſdom teaches us

to judge of the objects that ſurround us, with which we are in connection, which we enjoy or forego, which we purſue or do not purſue, and to eſteem or deſpiſe, to love and ſeek or to abhor and avoid them, proportionably to their value, their deſtination, their habitudes and relations to us and others, and the whole to which both they and we belong. It teaches us to diſtinguiſh appearance from reality, form from ſubſtance, momentary pleaſure from permanent ſatisfaction, tranſient often ſalutary pain from actual miſery, the means from the end, poſſeſſion from enjoyment and uſe; it teaches us to take every object for what it really is, for as diſpenſable or as indiſpenſable, for as tranſitory and fugacious, or for as untranſitory and permanent, for as important and great, for as inſignificant and ſmall, for as covetable or for as indifferent, as, in regard to its real nature and quality and the whole ſcope of its conſequences and effects, it is. And if we learn this, what an influence muſt it have on our happineſs How very much muſt it facilitate and ſmooth for us the path to its ſanctuary? How much ſeldomer ſhould we be deceived in our expectations! How much ſeldomer exert our faculties in vain and fail of our deſigns! How much ſeldomer be ſurpriſed, or impatiently grieve at what happens to ourſelves and to others! How much more eaſily diſpenſe with what has only the ſpecious appearance of good, and endure what has only the outward form or is only the firſt

advertiſement

advertiſement of evil! How much more completely enjoy the good that is and remains good in itſelf! Is not the want of this wiſdom, this juſt judgment of the value of things, one of the primary ſources of all the defeated hopes, all the fruſtrated expectations, all the diſappointments, all the fruitleſs undertakings and exertions, all the ſorrow and all the remorſe, all the diſcontent and all the miſery of mankind? They ſeek what is no where to be found, or ſeek it where it is not to be had; they expect from mankind and things, far more than either the one or the other is capable of affording; they run in queſt of every deceitful fantom, every empty ſhadow, with as much eagerneſs as if they were in chaſe of the ſubſtance itſelf, and then break forth into bitter lamentations on diſcovering their error when it is too late. Wouldſt thou avoid theſe miſtakes on the career of happineſs, o man; incline thine ear unto wiſdom, apply thy heart to underſtanding, let them guide and conduct thee; ſo ſhalt thou make but few unavailing ſteps towards the mark.

Another ſource, another ground of human happineſs is virtue: the overbalancing, predominant love for whatever is true and beautiful, right and expedient, the conſtant readineſs to act conformably to truth, to order, to the nature and relations of things, and to do the will of God. This virtue reduces all our inclinations to order and harmony, directs them all to the beſt, worthieſt, moſt permanent ob-

jects, gives them all their proper pitch, and ſtrengthens and weakens them according to the nature and importance of the ſubject. Virtue ſecures us from a thouſand fooliſh, childiſh wiſhes, from vain, extravagant affections, from inordinate violent paſſions; ſhe helps us to the maſtery over ourſelves and outward things, and teaches us to make a proper, in every caſe the beſt, uſe and application of all that we have and befalls us. And how much, how infinitely much do we thus gain with regard to happineſs! What ſources of diſappointment, of uneaſineſs and vexation, of diſſatisfaction are annihilated where neither envy, nor pride, nor ſelfiſhneſs, neither covetouſneſs, nor low ambition contract and infect the heart! And what ſources of ſatisfaction are opened, where modeſty and love, where generous, magnanimous ſentiments and affections bear ſway! How many things may the virtuous man diſpenſe with without inconvenience! How many others may he loſe without vehement pain! How eaſily is he pleaſed, with what ſatisfaction does he behold all that is conſiſtent with the laws of order, with the laws of the greateſt poſſible good! How multiplied, how enhanced are his ſatisfactions, his pleaſures, his endowments by the intereſt he takes in the pleaſures, the ſatisfactions, the endowments of his brethren! How eaſy it is to him to bear, to ſuffer, to work for others, and how agreeable to him are frequently the ſacrifices he makes to the general benefit, to the welfare of any of his fellow-

creatures!

creatures! Yes, the leſs virtue, ſo much the more miſery: the more virtue, ſo much the more happineſs. Both conſtantly increaſe in the ſame proportion; both are capable of infinite augmentation.

The third ſource, the third ground of human happineſs is piety, or the virtue that is founded on religion, which does and endures, diſpenſes with and enjoys all things from obedience and from love to God. It calls us to conſider all things, the evil as well as the good, the adverſe as well as the deſirable, in its dependency on God, to revere them all as ordinances and diſpenſations of his ſovereign wiſdom and goodneſs, as infallible means to the attainment of his all-comprehending deſigns, as the way to ſuperior perfection. It teaches us, in all that happens and does not happen, in whatever befalls us and others, in ſmall matters as in great, in the deepeſt night of affliction as in the ſplendour of proſperity, to adore the hand of our Father in heaven as holy and unblamable, and to expect from him only good, and conſtantly the beſt. It opens to us proſpects into a better world, where the ways of God with mankind will be more diſcovered, where we ſhall more clearly perceive the long-drawn linked ſeries of our fortunes, where many diſquieting difficulties and ænigmas will be ſolved, where at laſt pure truth, pure order, pure happineſs will prevail; proſpects that even here already greatly enhance the value of whatever good the pious man enjoys, and conſiderably diminiſh the

preſſure of all the evil he experiences and beholds. Yes, in his eyes moſt objects acquire a quite different aſpect. He ſtands firm and undiſmayed amidſt a thouſand formidable appearances and events, by which others are ſtunned and overthrown. In favour of him many reſtrictions and troubles are converted into benefits, many ſorrows into joys, many evils into ſources of greater good. Darkneſs itſelf is often light to him; and he ſees cauſes and reaſons for calmneſs and content, where others find only matter for lamentation and complaint. So true it is that in this reſpect alſo godlineſs is profitable to all things, and is the firmeſt foundation, the moſt exuberant ſource of human happineſs.

Yes, wiſdom, virtue, piety, to you will we expand our hearts; you ſhall be our guides and companions on the road of happineſs. You ſhall teach us rightly to judge, rightly to chuſe, circumſpectly to act. You ſhall diſpenſe light to our minds, peace and tranquillity to our hearts, truth to our thoughts and ſenſations, order and harmony to our whole deportment. You ſhall teach us to underſtand our faculties and our deſtination, to uſe and apply the former in the beſt manner, and to advance towards the latter by the directeſt way. Under your guidance and conduct, in confidence and courage, we will purſue our courſe towards the prize, and always be as ſure of ſeizing it as if we had hold of it already.

SERMON XLIV.

The Difference between Proſperity and Happineſs.

GOD, thou haſt deſigned us for happineſs and made us capable of the enjoyment of it. We are conſtantly longing and ſtriving for happineſs, and thy parental kindneſs is ever opening to us the moſt various and abundant ſources of it. Might we not ſo often thoughtleſsly and negligently paſs them by, but draw from them as much pleaſure and delight as they are able to afford! Alas, we are too often deceived by appearances! We are often dazzled and miſled by the glittering forms of pleaſure and happineſs, which are not and yield not, what they pretend to be and to yield! Yes, we frequently ſpend our ſtrength in vain, and with wearisome, fruitleſs ardour, ſeek our happineſs where it is not to be found. We frequently ſhun and avoid, as miſery and unhappineſs, what would prove a real benefit, a permanent bleſſing to us. We too often purſue the ſhadow with childiſh impetuoſity, and let the ſubſtance eſcape. And yet complain of miſery

and want of happineſs as of inevitable evils, as neceſſary conſequences of the preſent conſtitution of things. No, Lord, thou art righteous, thou art benignity and love, but we think and act often fooliſhly, often confound ſpecious appearance with reality, and ſeek not ſo much what is really true and good and remains true and good forever, as what glitters and ſhines, and promiſes us tranſient, fugacious joys and advantages. God, do thou thyſelf reclaim us continually more from theſe deviations. Teach us rightly to think and to judge of what has a tendency to render us happy or unhappy, and to chuſe between them with true chriſtian wiſdom. Let thy light, the light of truth, irradiate our minds, and thy ſpirit guide and conduct us in all our ways. Bleſs, to the furtherance of theſe deſigns, the exerciſe of reflection we are now about to begin on theſe important ſubjects. Let thy holy ſpirit in all things direct and rule our hearts, and hearken to our prayer through Jeſus Chriſt, our bleſſed lord, in whoſe name and words we addreſs thee as we ought: Our father, &c.

PROV. iv. 20, 21, 22.

My ſon, attend to my words; incline thine ear unto my ſayings. Let them not depart from thine eyes; keep them in the midſt of thine heart. For they are life unto thoſe that find them, and health to all their fleſh.

COULD I call your attention, and make it a matter of conſequence to you, my pious hearers, to remark the difference between ſome few words and the objects they denote, which in all languages are more or leſs confounded, and uſed as ſynonimous, I think I ſhould very much contribute to your moral improvement and your happineſs. Theſe words are: Proſperity and Happineſs, Adverſity and Unhappineſs, Fortunate and Happy, Unfortunate and Unhappy. That the objects thereby ſignified are materially different, may and muſt be preſently diſcovered by every reflecting perſon. Thoughtful however as well as thoughtleſs perſons but too frequently confound words and things in their minds and judgments, in their diſcourſes and actions; and thus the former as well as the latter, though in an inferior degree, are led into numberleſs errors, falſe and ſhallow judgments, into tranſgreſſions and follies, into anxieties and troubles. Whoever ſhould conſtantly avoid this confuſion, avoid it in thinking as well as in ſpeaking, in common life as well as in

ſcientific exerciſes; whoever in this reſpect ſhould think preciſely and ſpeak preciſely: ſuch an one would certainly, in point of ſatisfaction and happineſs, of wiſdom and virtue, far excel every other who ſhould not do ſo. The ſubject therefore well deſerves that we ſhould employ ourſelves ſomewhat longer upon it. It ſeems at firſt to relate merely to words; but they are words that have an extraordinary influence on morals, that create far, far more good or harm among mankind, than is uſually imagined. And therefore the ſignification and uſe of them is not an object of idle curioſity, but muſt ſtand in the cloſeſt connection with the grand concerns of life. May theſe remarks awaken your attention, your continued attention to my preſent diſcourſe and induce you to make a diligent application of it! My deſign is accurately to ſtate the manifold and eſſential difference between proſperity and happineſs and the words and objects relating to them; and then point out to you, what a beneficial influence this diſtinction muſt have on your judgments, diſpoſitions and actions. If, in purſuance of the admonition in our text, in this reſpect too, we let not wiſdom depart from our eyes; if we hearken to her dictates, and follow her precepts, we ſhall be happy and prudent, or intelligent perſons.

By proſperity, my pious hearers, we underſtand all outward privileges and endowments, all viciſſitudes and events that are correſpondent with our wiſhes and views, that have a tendency to promote

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our welfare, that promiſe us the gratification of our wants, or the removal of our troubles and the ceſſation of our ſufferings, or means of accommodation, of pleaſure and ſatisfaction; and the greater and more covetable theſe things appeared to us, the more we felt the want of them, the leſs reaſon we had to expect them, and the more unexpectedly they fell to our lot: ſo much the greater in our eſtimation, is the proſperity that we experience. To ſuch goods of fortune belong riches, ſuperfluity, ſtation, rank, eminence, power, honour, authority, health, ſtrength, ſucceſs in our buſineſſes and undertakings, deliverance from danger and diſtreſs, execution of our projects, attainment of our views, and the like. Adverſity is the reverſe of all this. It is loſs of our property and advantages, loſs in health and ſtrength, in influence and power: it conſiſts in adverſe events, unforeſeen obſtructions and difficulties, in pain and ſickneſſes, enemies and perils, and the like. — Happineſs or unhappineſs on the contrary is the ſtate of pleaſure or diſcomfort, of content or of diſcontent, in which the man is; and which is principally determined by the thoughts, ſentiments, deſires, propenſities, views, appetites, that predominate in him and over him, by the degree of his moral goodneſs and perfection. Hence, my pious hearers, it is already apparent, that proſperity and adverſity, happineſs and unhappineſs, are not neceſſarily connected together, that they are not the ſame things, that they rather are eſſentially different

different from each other. There are caſes enough where every man makes the proper diſtinction between theſe words, becauſe there the mutual interchange of them would be too glaringly abſurd; and this ſhews, that they are really diſtinct from each other, and in like manner in all other caſes ought to be diſtinguiſhed. Let us now conſider this difference on ſeveral other ſides, in order to imprint it the more deeply on our minds, and then proceed to draw from it conſequences of the utmoſt importance to us, which may have the moſt influence on our judgments and on our behaviour.

Proſperity and adverſity are ſomewhat without us; happineſs and unhappineſs ſomewhat that is within us. Riches and poverty, elevated and humble ſtation, health and ſickneſs, progreſs and oppoſition, are without us, relate to our outward condition, to the relations and habitudes in which we ſtand to the reſt of mankind and viſible things, to our body, which is not our proper ſelf, but which our ſoul at preſent inhabits and employs as its inſtrument. Pleaſure and diſcomfort on the other hand, content and diſcontent, are within us, relate to our internal condition, to the temper and diſpoſition of our ſoul, to its relation to truth and virtue, to God its creator, and the inviſible the ſpiritual world: they are peculiar to our ſpirit, and determine its being, its life, its activity.

Again: Proſperity and adverſity depend not always, and never entirely on ourſelves, on our own volition

volition and exertion, but on a thouſand accidental circumſtances and things, that are not in our power, that we can ſeldom foreſee, ſeldom bring to paſs, ſeldom combine with our views, and as ſeldom employ to the furtherance and attainment of them according to our wiſhes. It never depends on us in what ſtation we ſhall be born and educated, in what character we ſhall appear on this ſcene of things; and ſeldom, extremely ſeldom is it generally ſpeaking in our choice, to become as rich, as powerful, as great, to be as healthy and ſtrong, and to purſue our way to this or the other object, as unimpeded, as we might wiſh. Neither proſperity nor adverſity is ſo combined with the moral character and the moral conduct of mankind, as to enable us to draw concluſions from the one to the other, and to conſider them both as cauſe and effect. They are goods and evils diſtributed by the Father of mankind among his children, in totally different views, and for the moſt part concealed from us. Happineſs and unhappineſs on the other hand depend moſtly, depend in ſome ſort entirely upon us. According as we think and judge thus or otherwiſe, are thus or otherwiſe diſpoſed, thus or otherwiſe behave towards God and man: ſo are we pleaſed or diſpleaſed, contented or diſcontented; ſo all ſurrounding objects appear to us thus or otherwiſe, with a brilliant or with a gloomy aſpect; ſo troubles and evils change for us into advantages and benefits, but likewiſe goods and joys into want and pain. As little as it

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generally depends on us to be proſperous, that is, to be rich, eminent, mighty: ſo certainly does it depend on us to be happy, that is, to be contented and pleaſed, and to rejoice in our lives. Though we cannot avert and remove from us all misfortune, all adverſe events, yet certainly we can avoid unhappineſs or miſery, if we do but earneſtly reſolve on it. If we are not able to change outward things according to our pleaſure; yet can we ſo alter our ideas of them, our whole turn of mind and manners, as reaſon and our own intereſt require us to do.

Yet more. Proſperity and adverſity are ſomewhat tranſitory, ſomewhat extremely changeable and tranſient: happineſs and unhappineſs on the other hand are far more ſtationary and laſting. The aſpect and the worth of the former vary with every alteration in age, in health, in habits of life, in taſte, in the outward connections and relations of the individual. According to the variety of theſe circumſtances, proſperity often changes into adverſity, and the latter into the former. Power and diſtinctions are frequently but ſplendid burdens, and the loſs of them procures freedom and repoſe. And is not all that is termed proſperity and adverſity ſubject to the greateſt inſtability, to the moſt various and ſudden viciſſitudes? Is it not entirely confined to this terreſtrial life? Will not both of them be buried with us? Do not both the one and the other remain behind, on our paſſing over to another ſtate? Happi-

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neſs and unhappineſs on the other hand, how much more unchangeable and permanent! Pleaſure and diſcomfort are and remain everlaſtingly pleaſure and diſcomfort, in recollection as in enjoyment; content and diſcontent are and remain everlaſtingly content and diſcontent, in every age, in every ſtation, in every mode of life, in every connection, while we live and when we are dying, on this ſide and beyond the grave, in this and in the future world. A man's temper and habits are not ſo eaſily altered as his outward condition. The former make deeper, more durable impreſſions on his ſoul than the latter; impreſſions which neither death nor the grave efface, which accompany him into eternity, and there form the baſis of his ſuperior felicity, or his greater miſery. Be we as fortunate or unfortunate as we may, yet we muſt at one time ceaſe, yet we muſt ſoon ceaſe to be ſo; happy or unhappy we may be and continue for a whole eternity. Happineſs, but not proſperity, paſſes along with us in all future worlds and eternities: unhappineſs and miſery, but not adverſity, can alſo purſue us thither.

This is not all. Proſperity and adverſity have thei ſtated magnitude, an utmoſt pinnacle, which they cannot overtop. The nearer they approach to that, the nearer they draw to their end, the more ſure and infallible is the declenſion of one and the ceſſation of the other. Happineſs, on the other hand, knows no bounds; it is, like the perfection whereon

whereon it reſts, capable of an augmentation and elevation to infinity. The ſources of pleaſure and of content are no leſs various than inexhauſtible to every intelligent mind, that has learnt to prize and to uſe them; and their enjoyment is not attended with ſatiety and ſurfeit, while the poſſeſſion of proſperity eaſily excites languor and diſguſt. But likewiſe unhappineſs may ariſe to a very high degree, ſo as to exceed by far all the hardſhips and preſſures of adverſity. It can overpower all the capacities and faculties of the man, and fill them all with pain and anguiſh. It attacks him in his very heart, and is as cloſely, as intimately connected with him as his own thoughts and ſenſations.

Finally, my pious hearers, proſperity is a ſubordinate inſtrument; happineſs is an ultimate end. Happineſs is the mark, at which we all run; unhappineſs the abyſs we all endeavour to avoid. We ſeek riches, honour, and various outward advantages, in order to be happy; we ſhun poverty, lowneſs of ſtation, contempt, and the like, in order to be not unhappy. We ſeek thoſe goods, and ſhun theſe evils only in ſo far as we hold them to be fit means for leading us to that mark, or for preſerving us from this abyſs. As certainly and eſſentially therefore as means and end, mark and way to the mark, are different from each other; ſo certainly and eſſentially are proſperity and happineſs, adverſity and unhappineſs different from each other.

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From the difference between theſe words and objects, which after conſidering it on various ſides we have found to be undeniable on all, let us proceed to deduce ſome of the moſt important conſequences, and make the application of them to our judgments and our behaviour.

One perfectly natural conſequence of the difference we have obſerved between theſe words and the objects ſignified by them is this: Not every one can be proſperous; but every one can be happy. Not every one can eſcape adverſity, or remove all adverſity from him; but every one can avoid unhappineſs. and defend himſelf from miſery. The aſſertion is ſelf-evident, and needs no formal proof. Not every one can be healthy, ſtrong, beautiful, rich, powerful, great; but every one can think reaſonably and judge juſtly, every one can learn to will and to ſeek only what is beſt, every one can get the maſtery over himſelf and his ſenſual appetites, ſquare his life by the precepts of wiſdom, addict himſelf to virtue and piety, and by theſe means lay a firm foundation for laſting ſatisfaction and permanent pleaſure. Not every one can avert from him want, loſs, meanneſs of condition, ſcorn, pain, bondage, adverſe events; but every one can weaken the unpleaſant, hurtful effects and impreſſions of theſe things upon him, can learn to bear them with patience and fortitude, can uſe them to his moral improvement, and maintain, notwithſtanding them, the ſerenity of his mind and the repoſe of his ſoul. If proſperity and adverſity

depend on a thouſand accidental things that are without us; yet happineſs and unhappineſs depend on our own choice, on our own will and endeavour, purely on things that belong to ourſelves, and over which we have at leaſt more power than over any thing elſe.

Another conſequence, flowing no leſs naturally from it, is this: The proſperous man is not always happy, and the unhappy not always unproſperous. If the nature of the thing itſelf did not inform us of this, hiſtory and experience would not allow us to doubt it. Or is then every rich, every powerful, every titled, every healthy and ſtrong man happy? Is on the other hand every poor, every indigent, every low, every ſick and weak man, every man-ſervant, every maid-ſervant, all of thoſe called the vulgar, unhappy? Are then the former always contented and pleaſed, always briſk and merry; and the latter always diſpleaſed and diſſatisfied, always ſad and dejected? How frequently do the former envy the better lot of the latter. How often do they wiſh to exchange their ſplendid miſery, their glittering burdens for the ſeeming penury and the unnoticed obſcurity of the latter! How frequently does the gaiety, the tranquillity of mind, the unſolicitous contentment of theſe, put to ſhame the corroding care and diſquietude, the anxious ſolicitude, that prey upon the others. No, here ſemblance and reality, form and ſubſtance, are not always, perhaps but rarely, found together. So eaſily do proſ-

perity and adverſity blind and deceive us, ſo eaſily do happineſs and unhappineſs lie concealed from our eyes. The former attract and affect obſervation and noiſe: the latter love and ſeek ſilence and retreat, and are wont to withdraw from every prying obſerver.

A third conſequence from our foregoing remarks is this: The proſperous man may indeed be at the ſame time happy, but he will not be ſo and is not ſo merely by the poſſeſſion of his good fortune; whereas the happy man is not neceſſarily in want of proſperity in order to his happineſs: he can be happy without it. Indeed the rich, the powerful, the great man, may be alſo happy, he may be pleaſed and contented. But he is not and will not be ſo, at leaſt he is not and will not be ſo for any long time, not in a laſting and ſubſtantial manner, merely becauſe he is rich, becauſe he is powerful, becauſe he is great. In order to be and to become thus happy, he muſt be alſo intelligent and wiſe, virtuous and pious, he muſt underſtand, poſſeſs and enjoy nobler, more durable privileges and endowments, he muſt make the beſt, the worthieſt uſe of his outward proſperity. Whereas, if the man, by a juſt, noble way of thinking and acting, by well regulated affections and appetites, by an innocent, virtuous life, by true, chriſtian piety, has brought peace and ſerenity within, and opened all the avenues of his heart to the influences of the love of God and man: he needs neither be rich, nor powerful, nor great, nor

healthy and ſtrong, nor to poſſeſs other outward diſtinctions, in order to be happy and to be ever becoming happier. He can diſpenſe with all thoſe things, can be diveſted of them all, and yet be eaſy and cheerful, and yet be contented and gay.

Not proſperity therefore, this is a fourth conſequence, not proſperity, but happineſs is the object for which we ſhould ſtrive; not adverſity, but unhappineſs is the evil that we ſhould with all diligence ſhun and avoid. Unleſs we obſerve this diſtinction, and regulate our conduct accordingly, we ſhall waſte our powers to no purpoſe, we ſhall miſs of our aim, and ſhall ſooner or later repent of our error. Thus it frequently happens, that we ſtrive with unwearied efforts to obtain riches and abundance, as the ſovereign good of man. But are then riches and abundance one and the ſame thing with happineſs? Can we then tell before hand, whether riches and abundance will be profitable or pernicious to us, whether we can and ſhall with them be happy, pleaſed and contented? Thus we frequently exert all our faculties to raiſe ourſelves from obſcurity and humbleneſs of ſtation into eminence, as though we could only live and be happy in that eminence. But is then eminence and happineſs one and the ſame thing? Do we then previouſly know whether eminence or lowneſs of ſtation be better for us, whether we ſhould not turn giddy on the pinacle of proſperity, and tumble headlong down into diſgrace and wretchedneſs?

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No, my dear friends, would ye make the proper uſe of theſe conſiderations; never confound the means with the end, the object with the way to the object. Strive more for happineſs than for proſperity. Seek the former as your ultimate object, the latter as means. At no time ſacrifice the former to the latter. Be more afraid of unhappineſs than of adverſity. Never conſider that as a neceſſary conſequence of this, and never this as a neceſſary cauſe of that. Therefore do not immediately think yourſelf unhappy, when adverſity meets you; fancy not that you have loſt all, not the principal, by the loſs of outward privileges and endowments; do not refuſe yourſelf to all the ſources of pleaſure, if by chance ſome of them are drained or troubled. Neither however rejoice at every proſperous event, as you would have reaſon to rejoice at true and laſting happineſs. Carefully diſcriminate between proſperity and happineſs, adverſity and unhappineſs, in your reflections and judgments, as well as in your efforts. This is the foundation of all true wiſdom, of all genuine virtue, of all permanent ſatisfaction.

Do the ſame alſo in the judgments you form concerning others. Eſteem, if ye will, the rich, the powerful, the great as proſperous; but eſteem them not happy. With all their advantages, they may as probably be wretched as happy, if they are deficient in wiſdom and virtue and piety. So, on the other hand, pity the poor, the indigent, the low-conditioned man as unproſperous, as a man to whom

outward circumſtances are not favourable. But pity him not as unhappy. With all theſe deficiences, he may ſtill be pleaſed and contented, may be happy, if he have wiſdom and virtue and piety for his companions on the journey of life. Oh may they accompany and guide us all on our plain or rugged, our obſcure or ſhining path! How totally otherwiſe, how much more juſtly ſhall we then contemplate riches and poverty, elevation and lowneſs, health and ſickneſs, life and death; how differently ſhall we learn to judge of them, to deſire or to dread, to ſeek and to uſe them! How certainly and ſafely attain to the goal of happineſs!

SERMON XLV.

View of the Sources of Human Happineſs.

GOD, moſt gracious and affectionate parent, how happy might we all be even here on earth, did we but ſo prize and employ the ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure which thou openeſt to us, as men and as chriſtians, in a manner ſuitable to their deſtination and to thy gracious will! How manifold, how exuberant, how inexhauſtible are theſe ſources! How great is the preponderance of the agreeable and good over the diſagreeable and evil, that ſubſiſts in the natural and in the moral world, within us and without us! Yes, on all ſides we are ſurrounded by the moſt diverſified, the moſt glorious demonſtrations of thy paternal providence and love. On all ſides we behold thee, the All-bountiful, diffuſing life and energy and joy of numberleſs kinds, over all thy creatures. On all ſides we find the commodious, the agreeable, the delightful, intimately connected with the neceſſary and indiſpenſable. Heaven and earth, mankind and brutes, na-

ture and religion, reflection and experience, all exclaim in accents distinct and clear, that perfection and happiness is the ultimate, the only aim of all that thou dispossest and dost, that thou decreest and permittest, that thou commandest and forbiddest, that thou givest and takest away. Yes, it is thy sovereign purpose that we should all be happy, that we should be already so even here on earth, and if we are not it is solely by our own guilty conduct. Alas, how often do the purest, the richest sources of satisfaction and pleasure, invite us to enjoyment in vain, how often do they flow by us unused and unobserved, or are rendered turbid and tasteless to us by follies and sins! — Oh might we better understand our riches, and more worthily use them! Might we more plainly perceive, more sensibly apprehend the multitude and the value of the benefits with which thou art daily and hourly blessing us, and honour thee by a cheerful and grateful enjoyment of them! Bless then, dear source of all our joys, bless the considerations which we are proceeding to enter upon concerning these objects. Let them call forth our utmost attention to the manifold and abundant sources of happiness which thou hast prepared for us, and quicken us to a diligent and faithful use of them. We ask it of thee in filial confidence, as the votaries of Jesus, and address thee further in the form he gave us: Our father, &c.

PSALM, XXXIV. 8.

Oh taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is!

BUT too often, my pious hearers, a man reckons himſelf poor, becauſe he is ignorant of his wealth, or has not learnt to calculate and to value it properly. But too often he accounts himſelf not happy, or unhappy, merely becauſe he does not obſerve, or does not attend to the various, ever flowing ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure that ſtand open to him on all ſides, and ſeeks with great trouble at a diſtance what lies cloſe beſide him, offering itſelf to his enjoyment. But too often he reckons only particularly fortunate incidents, particularly deſirable and ſatisfactory events, only exceedingly agreeable ideas, or rapturous, extatic ſenſations, as forming what he terms his happineſs, without taking into the account a hundred other things, which juſt as well, though in a ſubordinate degree, procure him ſatisfaction and pleaſure. If he have ſurmounted obſtacles, or conquered difficulties, which he had held to be inſuperable and unconquerable; if he be freed from certain troubles and afflictions that preſſed him long and pained him ſorely; if he obtain ſome particular advantage for which he had been hitherto longing to no purpoſe; if ſome of his peculiar hopes be fulfilled, the accompliſhment whereof he could not think very probable;

if

if certain events happen, which he wiſhed indeed, but could hardly expect; if he enjoy pleaſures and delights that captivate his whole ſoul, and in the moment of enjoyment leave him nothing to wiſh for more: yes, then, but only then, he thinks himſelf happy. All theſe things however cannot frequently happen, can but ſeldom occur. Not every day, not even every year of our life on earth, can be marked by ſuch fortunate events, by ſuch wiſhed for occurrences, by ſuch raviſhing joys, by ſuch ſignal alterations in our conditions and fortunes. Therefore the man in whoſe eyes this alone is happineſs, perhaps accounts himſelf, during the greater part of his life, not happy, or unhappy. Although all this while there ſtand open before him and beſide him, conſtantly, to-day as yeſterday, and to-morrow as to-day, ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure, no leſs pure than copious, courting him to enjoyment. But he eſteems them not, overlooks them, paſſes by them, or draws from them without clear conſciouſneſs, without conſideration. As we are deſirous to be happy, my dear friends, let us avoid theſe but too common errors and miſtakes. Let us to this end take a ſlight view of the principal ſources of our happineſs, and calculate the amount of our actual riches: omitting all the unuſual, the extraordinary and rare, from the account, and only ſetting down what is conſtantly in our poſſeſſion, what is always in our power, what may daily procure us ſatisfaction and pleaſure. So ſhall we certainly, according

cording to the expreſſion of our text, taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is, how bountiful and kind our maker is, and how liberally he has provided for the happineſs of his intelligent creatures.

The conſciouſneſs of our proper ſelf; the actual uſe of our faculties; the enjoyment of nature; the pleaſure of reflection; the pleaſure of virtue and beneficence; the agreeableneſſes of ſocial, the comforts of domeſtic life; and the joys of piety: theſe, my pious hearers, are the chief ſources of our happineſs; ſources that ſtand open to us all, and from whence we may draw ſatisfaction and pleaſure from day to day.

Firſt then ſelf-conſciouſneſs, or the ſentiment of what we are, and what we may and ſhould become; the apprehenſion of the natural and moral endowments that we have, the faculties and capacities that we poſſeſs, the relations and habitudes we ſtand in to God and to the world: what an abundant, never failing ſource of agreeable ideas and ſenſations, of happineſs, muſt it be to the reflecting mind! As the rich man is gratified in counting his riches, in meaſuring his acres, in reckoning up his means of pleaſure: ſo much and greatly more muſt it rejoice the reflecting man, when he feels the dignity of his nature, and holds himſelf to be that which he really is. But would we draw pleaſure and delight from this ſource, my pious hearers; we ſhould frequently reflect upon ourſelves; we ſhould not in the multitude of outward

ward objects that occupy and distract us, lose sight of ourselves; we should not, like the generality of mankind, exist and live more without than within us. We should rather cherish and sharpen self-consciousness by reflection. We should frequently say to ourselves: How great and extensive the use and application I can make of my little and mean faculties, weak and impotent as I may be in other respects! What powers, what special privileges, do I possess, as a man, as a reasonable, free, and moral agent, as a citizen, as a member of a polished, enlightened society, as a christian, as an heir of immortality and of everlasting life! How far does all this raise me above the whole inanimate and animal creation How far even above a considerable part of my brethren on earth, who are less fortunate than myself! And of what enterprises and affairs, of what great matters, of what continually progressive evolving and perfecting am I capable! To what lengths may I not proceed in the knowledge of truth, in the controul of myself and of outward objects, in the most arduous and masculine virtues! And shall I know and feel this, without inward satisfaction, without cheerful gratitude to God, my creator and father! And shall I not daily rejoice in it, since all this essentially appertains to me, since I have and am and remain all this, at one time as well as at another, whatever complection my outward state and circumstances may wear and assume!

Another

Another ſource of our happineſs is the manifold actual uſe of our capacities and abilities, and the pleaſure that is connected with the legitimate, uſeful application of them, and particularly with an induſtrious, buſy life. What alterations and effects, within and without us, may we not all, each in his ſtation and in his place, with our intellectual and corporeal faculties, daily produce! How many matters uſeful to ourſelves and to our brethren, commence, continue, complete! When paſſes a day, in which we cannot conceive, contrive, do, promote, perform much real good! And if we did it with more conſciouſneſs and conſideration; if we felt and reflected more that we are the favoured, the eminently endowed creatures, that can think and contrive and do and perform all this; if we more frequently thence drew concluſions of the excellency of our nature, of our previous diſpoſitions, of our capacities and powers, of the grandeur of our deſtination, and more reſigned ourſelves to the tranſporting preſages, the beautiful proſpects of futurity, which this gives and opens to our view: how very much would the ſum of our agreeable ideas and ſenſations be augmented! How much happineſs ſhould we already enjoy in the proper uſe, in the right application of our capacities and faculties, without regard to the reſult! How ſeldom ſhould we then complain of exertion, toil and labour! How much pleaſure ſhould we find even in this exertion, this toil and labour! How eaſily

ſhould we pacify ourſelves on every fruitleſs or apparently fruitleſs purſuit or attempt, by the reflection: I have however thought and acted as an intelligent, reaſonable being! I have however had a conſcious ſenſe of my pre-eminence over the inferior claſſes of creatures and my affinity with intelligences of a ſuperior order; I have maintained the poſt aſſigned me by my maker; exerciſed the faculties he gave me, and ſtrengthened them by exerciſe; laboured at my improvement, and forwarded myſelf more or leſs towards my completion! And may not the enlightened, the reflecting, the well-diſpoſed man, daily ſay this, and daily find ſatisfaction in the ſentiment! Let him be otherwiſe buſied as he will, employing his faculties to what purpoſe he will, whether he perform much, or little, or nothing with them: yet he has uſed them agreeably to the ends for which they were given, conformably to the will of God; and if he do it with intelligence and conſideration, then he has not employed them in vain, he has thereby furthered his perfection, and this is the ſtraiteſt, the ſureſt way to happineſs.

A third ſource, in confluence with the laſt mentioned, is reflection; the reflection on whatever we feel and conceive and do, on whatever we ſee and hear and learn, on all that ſurrounds us and happens to us. The more we reflect on all things; the more light is ſhed on all; the more do chimerical and imaginary difficulties vaniſh from before our

our eyes; the brighter and plainer is our path of life; the more connection and order and wiſe deſign do we diſcover in what otherwiſe would perplex and diſturb us. This reflection, when we are once converſant with it, and have taſted its ſweetneſs, is a perennial fount of happineſs, in the profoundeſt ſilence as well as in the midſt of noiſe and tumult, in the moſt perfect ſecluſion as in the moſt numerous company, in the darkeſt night as in the ſplendour of the meridian ſun. It is the ſource of delight, which leaſt of all depends on external objects, on events and turns of fortune; is moſt of all in our own power; is continually neareſt at hand; is moſt ſeldom and never entirely dried up; to the uſe whereof we leaſt of all are in want of extraneous help, and the enjoyment whereof moſt of all makes us apprehend our dignity, raiſes us higheſt above viſible and tranſitory things, and brings us neareſt to ſuperior beings, even to the deity himſelf. From this ſource have all the wiſe and good of every age and every nation, drawn that repoſe and contentment, that conſolation and joy, by which they diſtinguiſhed themſelves above other men, by which they were enabled to diſpenſe with and to loſe ſo many things, without uneaſineſs and without regret, to bear and to ſuffer ſo many things with calmneſs and ſerenity of mind, to do and to perform ſo many things with complacency and delight; and, in every ſtation, in all the viciſſitudes of outward fortune, to be pleaſed and

and happy. Oh draw from this ſource, all ye who live amongſt poliſhed and enlightened perſons, and have ſo many means and incentives to reflection. Cultivate your underſtandings, cultivate all your mental faculties with diligence and care; give a new edge to your attention and your obſervation, be on your guard againſt heedleſſneſs and levity; view, remark, enjoy, do all things as thinking, rational creatures; purſue every ray of light that darts upon you, every track of truth that preſents itſelf to you: ſo will you never experience the oppreſſive burden of languor and diſguſt, ſo deſtructive to happineſs; ſo will you underſtand how to be continually employed, and how to be always agreeably employed; and, inſtead of leading a dream-like life, your life will be truly joyous in the clear conſciouſneſs of what you conceive and do.

The pleaſure of virtue and of beneficence is a fourth ſource of human happineſs, which ſtands open to us all, and whence we may daily draw. And how pure, how abundant is this ſource! What day paſſes by without affording us an opportunity of confirming ourſelves in ſome good diſpoſition; of combating and controuling ſome bad propenſity, of ſtifling ſome irregular inclination, ſome corrupt paſſion in its very riſe; of gaining ſome victory over ourſelves and the world; of exerciſing ourſelves in ſome manly virtue, in the fulfilment of ſome arduous or painful duty; of bring-

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ing ſome offering to God, of making ſome ſacrifice to conſcience; and thereby of giving proof of our faithfulneſs and integrity, and thereby likewiſe of advancing our moral perfection! What day does not afford us opportunity for doing various offices of civility and acts of kindneſs to others; for freeing them from ſome difficulties and burdens; for alleviating their troubles, their labours, their buſineſſes in various ways; for contributing, now in this manner, then in that, one while more, at another leſs, to their ſupport, to their comfort, to their pleaſure, to their ſatisfaction; and therefore of being variouſly uſeful and beneficial to ſociety in general, and to many individuals of it in particular! And, if we underſtand and feel the worth of virtue, the worth of a generally uſeful life, how much ſolid and pure ſatisfaction muſt every victory gained over ourſelves, every obligation faithfully anſwered, every good deed performed, every proper application of our faculties and ingenuity, every greater or ſmaller contribution to the happineſs of a brother, every approximation to perfection, procure us! And how very much does the enjoyment of this ſource of happineſs depend on our own behaviour! How much more is it in our power, than all outward privileges and endowments to which we ſo ardently aſpire, and which we ſo ſeldom obtain!

A no leſs copious ſource of ſatisfaction and pleaſure is fifthly the contemplation and the enjoy-

ment of the beauties and productions of nature. And ſurely, my pious hearers, whoever pays attention to the energies, the activity, the courſe, the deſigns of nature, in the whole and in the parts; whoever conſiders her works with open eyes and an attentive mind, and has a taſte and feeling for her no leſs ſtriking than numberleſs beauties and charms; whoever with a benevolent, liberal mind, takes an intereſt in the exiſtence, in the life, in the manifold occupations and pleaſures, in the various exhibitions and expreſſions of joy of all living creatures; whoever expands his heart to the agreeable ſenſations which the view of the heavens and the earth, which the ſcenery and activity of the day, and the ſolemn ſtillneſs of the night, which every revolution of the ſun and the moon, every return of the ſeaſons, which the breath of the ſpring, the magnificence of the ſummer, the profuſion of the autumn, and the greater repoſe of the winter, excite in tender and ſuſceptible minds, and then raiſes his thoughts to God, the creator, the governor, the father of the univerſe, and beholds him diſpenſing all around with ſo liberal a hand, life and energy, bounties and joys, of innumerable kinds, to all his creatures: what ſources of ſatisfaction and delight muſt offer themſelves to him which way ſoever he turns his eyes! With how much greater alacrity and ſatisfaction muſt he continue to purſue his path of life; how many more agreeable ideas and ſenſations muſt occur to him,

him, and as it were preſs upon him, than if he did not attend to all this, did not ſet any value upon it, and walked with an inattentive mind and an inſenſible heart among all the bounties and beauties of nature, without recognizing and honouring the traces of the benign preſence of their author! No, my dear friends, would you taſte and ſee how gracious the Lord is; ſo far from being indifferent to his works in nature, the frequent, attentive contemplation of them, and their ſilent enjoyment ſhould be one of the principal ſources from whence you derive your happineſs. It ſtands open to the poor as well as to the rich, to the low as well as to the high, refreſhing and rejoicing every one who ſeeks from it refreſhment and joy.

Add to this a ſixth ſource of human happineſs, I mean the various comforts and ſatisfactions of ſocial life. A ſource of delight, entirely barred againſt no man, and which ſtands more open to us, who have attained to a higher degree of cultivation, and live in the middling ſtations, than to many others, if withal we are truly ſociable, and ſuſceptible of the nobler ſatisfactions ariſing from ſocial intercourſe. Yes, my pious hearers, if we frequent the ſociety of our brethren with a capacity for happineſs; that is, with an unenvious, benevolent, affectionate heart, with a heart that takes an intereſt in all that others have and do and enjoy that is amiable and good; with a heart that readily rejoices with the joyful, and laments with the

mourner, and unreluctantly opens itſelf to others; if we bring with us an eye more inclined to ſpy out the good than the bad, rather the excellencies than the defects of a fellow-creature, and had rather dwell upon the former than upon the latter; if in our intercourſe with others, we are modeſt, diſcreet, complaiſant, obliging, willing and ready to contribute what we can to the pleaſure of the company, and kindly accept and uſe what they afford us in return: what ſources of agreeable ideas and ſenſations do we find! How much of what is beautiful and good do we ſee, hear, experience, enjoy, communicate and receive? What a charming ſpectacle to the friend of mankind does the diverſity of abilities, of talents, of aptitudes, of excellencies, of the expreſſions of joy and pleaſure he obſerves amongſt his brethren, preſent! What grand and delightful proſpects it opens to him in reference to their future appointment and deſtiny! What may he not hope and expect from ſuch creatures! How bright and radiant in them do oftentimes the lineaments of the image of God appear to him, the traces of a ſuperior origin, the previous diſpoſitions to future aggrandiſement! And how great the delight which all this muſt procure to his humane and generous heart!

And then, my pious hearers, the comforts of domeſtic life, as well as the charms of friendſhip, what ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure do they offer to the man who knows how to value and to uſe them!

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What repoſe, what freedom, what genial relaxation after the burden and heat of the day, what recompenſe for toilſome labour and the fatigues of buſineſs, what a variety of pure enjoyment of nature, of innocence, of truth await him in the little circle of his family and friends whom he loves and by whom he is beloved! How can his heart refuſe to open all its avenues, to expand, to impart, and ſurrender itſelf to every agreeable idea and ſenſation, every noble ſentiment of his inherent dignity, of his virtue, his proficiency in goodneſs, his faithfully diſcharged duty, his daily taſk completed! How much ſatisfaction and pleaſure may here be given and received! And how much light, how much comfort, how much encouragement and conſolation does he find in the enjoyment of friendſhip! What troubles does it not alleviate, what pain not mitigate, what cares and diſquietudes does it not aſſuage! And how greatly does it heighten and multiply all his advantages and joys! How often do the comforts of domeſtic life and the tender aſſiduities of friendſhip compenſate ſuperabundantly the want of all the outward goods of fortune, and render the poor and humble man an object of envy to the rich and great, who have no knowledge of thoſe comforts! And is it not generally our own fault if we know them not, poſſeſs them not, enjoy them not, and are not happy in the enjoyment? Can it ever be entirely the caſe with the wiſe man, the virtuous man, the chriſtian, who is in deed and in truth a chriſtian?

Does he not always bear about with him the faireſt diſpoſitions, the acuteſt ſenſibility, the richeſt materials, and can it be very difficult for him to ſurmount by degrees the obſtacles he meets with, and by a mild, affectionate temper, by generous ſentiments and actions to conquer whatever may be at variance with the enjoyment of theſe delights!

In this ſurvey of the ſources of human happineſs, how is it poſſible for us to paſs over one of the pureſt and moſt exuberant of them all, I mean the joys of devotion, and the proſpect of everlaſting continuance and everlaſting happineſs? What abſence of outward privileges and endowments, what privation of them cannot this ſupply! What enjoyment of good do they not ſweeten and elevate, what apprehenſion of evil, what load of affliction, do they not weaken and alleviate! Yes, when I ſoar in ſpirit to the realms above; when I behold all in its dependence on God, in its connection with him; when I contemplate all as the work, as the arrangement, as the diſpenſation of his hand, as ſubſervient to the greateſt poſſible perfection; when I meditate on the intimate, the bleſſed relation in which I ſtand to the Almighty, the Allwiſe, the Allbountiful; when I think and feel that I am his creature, his ſubject, his ſon, that I am allied to angels, and of divine deſcent; when I pour out my heart before him, as to my father, who is eſſential love and benignity, commend my fortunes and thoſe of all my brethren to his ſupreme diſpoſal, and reſign myſelf

myſelf to his providence and to his promiſes; when I rejoice before him in my immortality, when I rejoice in the hope of approaching continually nearer to him, the Infinite, the Supremely Perfect, and of eternally growing in knowledge, in virtue, in happineſs: how great indeed, how bliſsful muſt I then feel myſelf! What pure, what ſublime delight then overflows my heart! How great the preponderance then of my agreeable ideas and ſenſations over the diſagreeable ones! How inconſiderable muſt the latter be in compariſon of the former! And who hinders you, men, chriſtians, who hinders you from drawing daily your fill from this ſource of ſatisfaction and pleaſure?

No, in ſources of happineſs you are not wanting, my dear friends; the brief ſurvey we have now been making is a proof of it. They ſtand open to you all. No human power can ſhut them againſt you without your conſent, they invite you all to enjoyment. They offer you all refreſhment, comfort, ſatisfaction, pleaſure, to the poor as well as to the rich, to the low as well as to the high, to the unlearned as well as to the learned. They are no leſs beneficial than innoxious, as pure as they are copious. Every one may draw from them in full meaſure, without the leaſt detriment to another; none can drain them dry; none can find them taſteleſs but by his own fault. No, nought but our own inattention and perverſeneſs, nought but follies and ſins can ſhut them againſt us, or diſturb and atte-

nuate them and deprive them of their efficacy. Surely, my dear friends, he that, ſurrounded by theſe ſeveral ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure, pants for ſatisfaction and pleaſure in vain; he that, with all theſe means of happineſs, is yet unhappy: he is ſo by his own fault; let him not accuſe nature, not the author of nature, not any dire neceſſity, but only himſelf. Proſperity and adverſity rarely depend on us; but happineſs and unhappineſs are always in our power; they entirely depend on our mind and manners, on the eſtimates we form of ourſelves and of external objects, and on the uſe we make of them. Attention and reflection, wiſdom and virtue and piety as certainly render us happy, as certainly as we reſign ourſelves to their influence and direction. Under the conduct therefore of theſe guides, make uſe, my dear friends, of the ſources of happineſs which your bountiful Father in heaven has opened and allotted to you; uſe them with diligence and fidelity; taſte and ſee in the enjoyment of them, how gracious the Lord is; and glorify him, your ſovereign benefactor, by a grateful, contented and cheerful enjoyment of his bounties, which are not leſs various than they are great.

SERMON XLVI.

The Chriſtian Doctrine concerning Happineſs.

GOD, thou haſt deſigned us all for happineſs, and furniſhed us with all the capacities and means for becoming actually happy. But how few of us reach this glorious object! How ſlowly we approach it! How frequently, faſcinated by error and ſin, do we miſtake the way to it! In what obliquities and intricate mazes do we often paſs the greater part of our lives! And then we complain of a deficiency of happineſs; perhaps cenſure thy wiſe ſettlements and diſpoſals, murmur at thy diſpenſations, and bewail the melancholy lot of humanity. And yet it is we who load ourſelves with the heavieſt burdens of life, and the miſery under which we ſo often ſigh, is miſery of our own ſeeking, moſt of the ſorrows that oppreſs us are the fruits of our own folly. Ah God, compaſſionate Father, have pity upon us; do thou lead us back from our deviations. Yes, thou haſt not abandoned thy erroneous, thy guilty children; thou haſt not

not left them to themſelves. Thou haſt ſent us thy ſon from heaven, in him thou haſt given us an infallible teacher of happineſs, a ſafe and faithful guide to felicity, a mighty deliverer from all miſery! Oh might we juſtly acknowledge thy parental kindneſs, and gratefully and worthily uſe it. Might we hearken to the voice of Jeſus, who warns us on thy part againſt every devious and mazy turning, and invites us back to the path of life; might we entirely ſubmit to his guidance, and willingly follow his directions to happineſs. We are met in thy preſence, o God, to imbibe his inſtruction on this ſubject; grant that it may be ſalutary to us all. Let us learn from it the way to true happineſs, and then walk cheerfully and reſolutely on it. We implore theſe bleſſings of thee in the name of thy ſon Jeſus; and, confiding in his promiſes, as he condeſcended to teach us we further addreſs thee: Our father, &c.

MATTHEW, v. 2, 3, 4, — 10.

And he opened his mouth and taught them, ſaying, Bleſſed are the poor in ſpirit: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted. Bleſſed are the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth. Bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled. Bleſſed are the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy. Bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God. Bleſſed are the peacemakers: for they ſhall be called the children of God. Bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs ſake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven.

IT is ſomewhat ſingular, my pious hearers, that the notions entertained by mankind concerning the ingredients of happineſs, and the means by which it is to be attained ſhould be ſo various and contradictory, while they agree together in nothing more than in the deſire, the earneſt, the ever active deſire of being happy and of continually becoming more happy. All are running in purſuit of one and the ſame object, happineſs; all imagine they are purſuing the direct road to it; think they perceive that object before them; think themſelves quite near to it: and yet proceed ſuch very different ways, frequently ways that are as directly oppoſite as evening to morning, as darkneſs to light. How then can it be otherwiſe than, that there muſt be diſappointed and

and weary travellers on the pilgrimage of life, how can it be otherwiſe than that moſt of you ſhould fail of their mark, and when they think they are on the point of ſeizing the prize, diſcover, to their great aſtoniſhment, that they are farther from it than ever? — But why then do you venture without a guide in a wilderneſs, where there is only one right and ſafe road, and ten thouſand devious turnings? or why do you make choice of guides, who are themſelves unacquainted with the right way, or ſuffer themſelves to be drawn aſide, by every lure, by every glimmering and fallacious light? Why do ye rather chuſe to go where you are hurried away by the clamour of ſenſual appetites, the impetuous cravings of violent paſſions, the torrent of prevailing manners and opinions, and the tyrannical example of the multitude, than where the light of reaſon ſhines before you, where you ſee the footſteps of the moſt venerable of mankind, where you are accompanied by calm conſideration, authentic certainty and the peaceful expectation of a deſirable iſſue? Why not avail yourſelves of the directions, the encouragements, the example of the guides and harbingers whom God has ſent you from heaven for the expreſs purpoſe of conducting you through this intricate labyrinth, of teaching you to avoid thoſe devious turnings, and to purſue the mark of the prize along the ſmootheſt, the ſafeſt path, and thus to be your light in darkneſs, your ſafeguard in danger, your ſtaff and ſupport under all impedi-

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ments and difficulties, your precedents in doubtful cases? Why not follow Jesus, who, along the very way that you are called to go, has actually attained to the summit of glory, and will take to himself all those who voluntarily and resolutely follow him, and will make them partakers of his glory? Oh submit to be taught by him what felicity is, and how we may attain to the possession and enjoyment of substantial permanent bliss. He is worthy of your entire confidence; the only infallible teacher of truth; a shepherd who laid down his life for his sheep, a guide, a ruler, who sacrificed himself for those whom the Father gave to him, who died for them, and who will as certainly guide us aright, as certainly as God has raised him from the dead, and has placed him over all at his right hand in heaven. Receive then his doctrine in our text, concerning what confers real privileges on man, and promises him permanent bliss. Observe how widely his doctrine on this matter differs from the general notions of mankind, compare them both together, and then try whether his declarations do not commend themselves to the common sense and the conscience of all reflecting persons. It is the christian doctrine concerning happiness that I now intend to lay before you. We will discuss the important question: wherein christianity teaches us to place our greatest privileges and to seek our bliss.

Come hither then, all ye who are panting after happiness, and perhaps have been long panting after

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it in vain, come and hear what ſuggeſtions and directions heavenly wiſdom gives you thereupon by her principal, moſt authentic teacher, Jeſus.

Perhaps, (ſhe calls to you by this her confident,) perhaps ye think that to be happy riches are neceſſary, that a man ſhould live in opulence in order to live pleaſed, that he requires a large ſtore for many years, or even for ages to come, that he may have no ſolicitudes about future days. Perhaps you are dazzled by the ſplendour that ſurrounds the wealthy, the elegance of their dreſs, the magnificence of their dwelling, the privileges that are granted them in ſociety, the deference that is paid them, the reſpect that they generally procure. But beware of miſtakes; let not this fallacious outſide deceive you. Means to happineſs are not happineſs; and the more eaſily thoſe means may be miſemployed, ſo much the farther do they commonly lead men off from that object. No, bleſſed are the poor: for their's is the kingdom of heaven. Though wealth, as wealth, excludes no man from the kingdom of heaven; though of itſelf it renders no man either incapable of being a chriſtian, or of enjoying the bliſs of the future life: yet it renders both difficult to but too many of its poſſeſſors. To too many it is a burden, indeed a ſplendid burden, ſtill however a burden, that weighs them to the earth, renders their progreſs on the path of life extremely dangerous, cauſing them to make a thouſand trips, and miſleading them into the groſſeſt iniquities. To them

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the injunctions of chriſtianity are but too often an inſupportable yoke, its promiſes have but few charms for them, and their ſenſual, worldly taſte diſqualifies them for the enjoyment of the purer delights of heaven. And when chriſtianity brings ſufferings on its confeſſors, when it requires coſtly ſacrifices of them, it muſt be extremely difficult for the rich man, it muſt be often impoſſible for him to prefer his duty to all things elſe, and by ſelf-denial and fidelity to ſecure to himſelf the recompenſes of the future world. It is well for the poor in ſpirit at ſuch times, well for them whoſe deſire of riches is moderate, whoſe hearts cleave not to earthly things, who know how to be content with a little! Their expectations will far ſeldomer fail them, their deſires are far more eaſily and completely gratified. Their road is free from a number of ſnares and obſtructions; no anxious cares purſue them on it; to them the commands of chriſtianity are far eaſier; to them no ſacrifice of earthly goods, that virtue or religion may require, appears too burdenſome; to them the better futurity preſents itſelf in the moſt charming form, and the treaſures of heaven even now attract their warmeſt affections.

Perhaps you think, (celeſtial wiſdom farther addreſſes us by Jeſus,) perhaps you think, that they alone deſerve to be accounted happy, who live ſumptuouſly and jovially every day, who coyly ſhun every ſerious thought, every ſentiment of ſadneſs and woe, who turn away their eyes and their heart from

from everything like trouble and miſery, who are continually roaming about in a larger or ſmaller circle of noiſy and ſtunning amuſements, and as it were ſport, laugh, trifle away the whole of their lives. But be not deceived; this is not the road to real, laſting happineſs. Levity is the character of fools, and folly degrades and leſſens the man, and puniſhes him ſooner or later with remorſe and trouble. Mere ſenſual pleaſure is ſeldom harmleſs, ſtill ſeldomer laſting, is frequently pernicious. Wild tumultuous joys are generally attended with ſurfeit, diſguſt, painful ſufferings; and all theſe things, even when they are the moſt innocent, leave the heart empty, and never ſatisfy the mind, which requires nobler food and employment. No, bleſſed are they that mourn: for they ſhall be comforted. Bleſſed is the man to whom ſerioufneſs and reflection are neither ſtrange nor irkſome, who frequently in the ſolemn hour of ſolitude bewails his ſins and failings and thoſe of his brethren, is indifferent and inſenſible to no ſpecies of human miſery, is not aſhamed of the tears of penitential ſorrow, of grief, of pity, of affection, which a tender conſcience, a ſenſible, a ſympathiſing heart and the ardent aſpiration after ſuperior perfection, ſo frequently cauſe him to ſhed! His ſerioufneſs promiſes and procures him far more real unadulterated pleaſure than the levity and wantonneſs of the fool. His ſorrow will procure him permanent joy; his generous, and humane tears will open to him plentiful ſources of comfort. The

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teſtimony of a good conſcience will bleſs him, peace and ſerenity will reign within his breaſt; and, when the world with its luſts is paſſing away and the pleaſure of the ſinner is changing into pain, then will joy embrace him, and his happineſs will begin to be truly great.

Perhaps you think thirdly, my pious hearers, that, in order to be happy, in order to maintain our conſequence and to live ſecurely in the world, we ſhould not patiently put up with an injury, ſhould let no affront paſs unreſented, ſhould ſubmit to none, concede to none, aſſert all our rights to the uttermoſt, and hearken to the demands of every rouzed or irritated paſſion. But be not deceived, calls Jeſus to us; this is not the way that leads to content and inward peace. Thus you will open to yourſelves inexhauſtible ſources of diſquietude, of trouble, of perplexity and remorſe. Thus will you repulſe your brethren from you and cloſe their hearts againſt you. Thus you can never have the true enjoyment of life. No, bleſſed are the meek: for they ſhall inherit the earth. Bleſſed is the man, who has the command of himſelf, who knows how to controul his anger, to ſubdue his antipathies, and is not under the authority of any impetuous paſſion! Bleſſed is he who is of an amicable, meek, inoffenſive temper, who has learnt candour and indulgence, to overlook failings, to ſupport loſſes, to ſuffer wrong, to forgive injuries! He will live far more ſecurely, will enjoy his life far more quietly and fully, will

love more and be more beloved; and the bleſſedneſs of love and the ſuavity of conſcious peace and the elevating ſentiment of ſelf-poſſeſſion, will make every ſacrifice eaſy to him and ſuperabundantly compenſate every loſs.

Perhaps you may view fourthly all the bounds in general which the precepts of religion and virtue ſet to your appetites and paſſions, as inconvenient, as obſtacles to your happineſs; perhaps you may imagine, that you would be completely happy, if you could with impunity break theſe bounds; if you could entirely give the rein to your deſires and purſuits of worldly goods, of outward diſtinctions, of ſenſual pleaſures, if you could throw off the reſtraints of religion and virtue; perhaps you pity them as unhappy who have nothing ſo much at heart as to be always becoming wiſer and better and more pious. But how little are they, how much are you to be pitied! You ſeek your liberty in bondage, your honour in what is degrading to man, your ſatiety in things that are ever whetting your deſires, but never ſatisfy them. No, bleſſed are they which do hunger and thirſt after righteouſneſs: for they ſhall be filled. Bleſſed are they who underſtand the whole value of virtue and piety, apprehend their entire beauty and lovelineſs, reſign themſelves entirely to their ſervice, with whom the inward ſpiritual perfection is everything, and who as earneſtly pant after it and as ſtrenuouſly purſue it, as the hungry and the thirſty long

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for food and refreſhment. Their deſires are directed towards the worthieſt objects, towards objects that are worthy of their moſt cordial affection and their moſt zealous endeavours, and never are theſe noble deſires deceived, never does God, the protector and rewarder of righteouſneſs and virtue, allow them to want means for their gratification. They are ſure not to miſs of the mark at which they are aiming, and as they perpetually proceed from one ſtage of perfection to another, ſo they advance from one degree of happineſs to another.

Perhaps fifthly (celeſtial wiſdom addreſſes us by Jeſus,) perhaps you imagine, that the man who would be happy ſhould think ſolely on himſelf, care ſolely for himſelf, concern himſelf about others only ſo far as his own intereſts permit, ſhut the avenues of his heart againſt all diſagreeable ſenſations which the ſight of miſery may excite, and not ſuffer himſelf to be diſturbed in the enjoyment of pleaſure by any participation in the diſtreſſes of another. But believe me, this is not the way to happineſs. By this means you contract your heart and the ſphere of your activity. By this means you exclude yourſelves from many ample and pure ſources of pleaſure. By this means you can neither promiſe yourſelves the good pleaſure of God, nor the love and aſſiſtance of your fellow-creatures. No, bleſſed are the merciful: for they ſhall obtain mercy. Bleſſed is the man whoſe heart is pervad-

ed by benevolence and compaſſion and officiouſneſs towards all his brethren, is moved at the miſery of another as at his own, who is fain to weep with them that weep, haſtes to relieve the wants of the poor and needy, and does good to all men according to his ability. Thus both his heart and his ſphere of operation expand alike, he lives in others as well as in himſelf, multiplies as it were his exiſtence, and enjoys the pureſt, the divineſt joys; the joys of beneficence. Him God will not be extreme to judge, him will the merciful parent of mankind treat far more graciouſly and indulgently ſtill than he treated his brethren, and all his fellow-creatures will vie with one another to ſhew him juſtice and indulgence, and to afford him help and relief in the time of need.

Perhaps you think farther, my pious hearers, that a continued attention to one's-ſelf, an unremitted vigilance over all the deſires and appetites of our hearts, the care to ſubmit them all to the will of God and to keep them all innocent and pure, the defeat and mortification of all inordinate fleſhly luſts, which religion and virtue enjoin, that theſe are endeavours and performances that ſet the moſt grievous bounds to your pleaſure and are not compatible with your happineſs. But from what follies and iniquities, from what enormities, from what thraldom and what miſery will you be ſecure, unleſs order, innocence, purity prevail in your minds, unleſs you keep your heart, that primary

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ſource of human happineſs and human miſery, with all diligence? No, bleſſed are the pure in heart: for they ſhall ſee God! Bleſſed are they who keep free from evil thoughts and deſires as well as from bad words and works, who war againſt all falſehood and impurity, who think and live in a godly manner, keeping clean from all filthineſs of the fleſh and ſpirit! Their virtue is not mere outſide ſhow; it is real and effective; it is firmly grounded, is immoveable; and juſt as real and durable is the internal peace and the happineſs that accompany it. They may ſoothe themſelves with the eminent favour of God, the pureſt and holieſt being, are capable of his more intimate communion, of his peculiar influence, and will hereafter in a better world be among his confidents, and be vouchſafed a nearer acceſs to him, the fountain of truth and perfection.

Perhaps you think ſeventhly, you who wiſh and ſtrive to be happy, that the peaceableneſs which religion and virtue recommend is incompatible with this happineſs, that it betrays weakneſs of mind, that you cannot thus be ſecure of your property, of your honour, your diſtinctions, that for the preſervation of them you ſhould avoid no uneaſineſs, no troubles, no ſtrife or contention, that by patience and forbearance you diſhonour yourſelves and ſhould demand ſatisfaction for every injury. But miſtake not, (ſays Jeſus, the teacher of happineſs ſent from God,) this way can never lead to that object. It

will carry you farther and farther from it. Every advantage that you thus acquire, you purchaſe with the loſs of your conſcious peace, the violation of your brotherly love, which is ſo rich in bleſſedneſs both to you and to your brethren; and ſtrife and diſcord are inexhauſtible ſources of confuſion, of trouble, of miſery. No, bleſſed are the peacemakers: for they ſhall be called the children of God. Bleſſed are they who have patience with the failings and infirmities of their neighbour, who love and promote concord, to whom all that connects man with man and confirms reciprocal love and harmony among them is ſacred, and who are ever ready, even at their own coſt, to cement again the friendſhip that has been diſſevered, and to knit faſter the tie that binds friends together. They are like-minded with God, the parent of us all, in regard to mankind they imitate him, the original of all perfection; they are ever gaining a nearer reſemblance to him in benignity and love; they are his followers, are his children in an eminent ſignification, and as ſuch may aſſure themſelves of his peculiar favour.

Perhaps you think finally, (heavenly wiſdom thus addreſſes us by Jeſus,) perhaps you think, that every loſs of worldly property, every trouble, every affliction is in direct oppoſition to happineſs, and that the advantages and ſatisfactions of virtue and piety are much too dearly purchaſed by the ſacrifices they ſometimes demand of their votaries. You

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lament over the virtuous, the pious, when under the preſſure of unmerited poverty and contempt, if they are ridiculed, ſlandered, perſecuted, if they are obliged to take up their croſs and follow their maſter in patience and ſufferings. But how little do they ſtand in need of pity even when God leads them along dark and rugged ways to perfection! How much happier are they even then than the voluptuary, who views every affliction with horror, ſinks under every burden, confines all his hopes and proſpects to this momentary life, and for every trifling intereſt or tranſient pleaſure denies the truth and acts againſt his conſcience! No, bleſſed are they which are perſecuted for righteouſneſs' ſake: for their's is the kingdom of heaven! Bleſſed are they who adhere faithfully to truth and virtue, to whom no affliction, which they cannot avoid without ſin, is too heavy, no ſacrifice which God and their conſcience demand of them, is too dear; who look more at inviſible things than at viſible, more at the crown of the conqueror than at the pains and toil of the conflict, and count all things for gain which brings them nearer to the goal of perfection. Great hereafter will be the reward of their fidelity, exuberant the compenſation for the loſſes they have ſuſtained, glorious the recompenſe of their ſufferings, the prize of their fortitude and perſeverance! To ſhare in the privileges of the victor will be their portion; lofty, divine joys will they reap from having ſowh in tears, they

will be the moſt bliſsful amongſt the bleſſed, and take the higheſt ranks of honour, of power, of glory, in the kingdom of God.

Theſe, my dear friends, theſe are the leſſons, theſe the declarations of the teacher ſent from God, the reſtorer of human happineſs. What concluſions are we now to draw from all this? How learn from it the way that leads to real happineſs? How follow along it our divine leader and precurſor? — Learn, — theſe his leſſons and declarations ſay to us, — learn rightly to diſcriminate between proſperity and happineſs, between proſperous and happy perſons. All outward privileges and endowments are proſperity; all inward perfection and the content and ſatisfaction founded upon it is happineſs. Jeſus is not our conductor to proſperity; his doctrine promiſes us neither riches, nor high ſtation, nor power and authority, nor a ſoft, voluptuous life. But he is our conductor to happineſs; his doctrines procure us reſt, content, ſatisfaction, ſpiritual perfection. Proſperity, of all changeable inconſtant things, is the moſt changeable and inconſtant; it falls to the lot of the fool as well as to the wiſe, to the wicked as to the good; forſakes the man frequently in his lifetime, forſakes him certainly at his death, remains for ever locked up in his grave, and nothing but the good uſe of it accompanies him into the future world. Happineſs is the end of the poſſeſſion and the enjoyment of all the goods of fortune; the only thing that is entirely

entirely and for ever our's; the only thing that can be the exclusive property of the wise and good; the only thing that, if it be once firmly fixed, neither death nor the grave can ravish from us; the only thing that we can take with us into eternity, and that we there may incessantly enjoy, incessantly increase. Strive therefore not so much to be prosperous as to be happy. The former rarely depends, the latter always depends on ourselves. The former is a gift of providence, generally dispensed without regard to merit; the latter is the fruit and reward of wisdom and of virtue.

Seek therefore your happiness, not in earthly, transitory things, not in riches, not in elevation and power, not in a soft voluptuous life. Seek it within you, and not without you. Seek it in the qualities and excellences of your mind and your heart, and not in the privileges of station, of rank, of honour and of respect. Reduce your appetites, your desires, your inclinations, your passions to order. Subject them all to the laws of truth and of christianity. Set bounds to your desires in regard to worldly things, give all your inclinations the best direction, let reason, let the love of God and man bear rule over all your passions.

Seek your happiness in virtue, in the willing and resolute performance of your duty, in unremitted exertion after higher perfection, in innocence of heart and purity of life, in a meek and gentle spirit,

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in the enjoyment and promotion of peace and concord, in benevolence and beneficence towards all men, in magnanimous ſacrifices for truth and integrity. — Seek it in whatever is profitable to you and promiſes you pleaſure, not only in this world, but alſo in that which is to come, in whatever has the approbation of your conſcience, the approbation of all the wiſe and upright, the approbation of God, and ſecures to you the loving-kindneſs and the gracious retributions of your lord and judge, your father in heaven. — — Seek in ſhort not to ſeem happy, but actually to be ſo. Be not ſo merely in the opinion and in the judgment of others, but in deed and in truth. Prefer the quiet, unobſerved, enjoyment of real and laſting privileges and endowments, the enjoyment of rational, ſedate and cheerful reflection, the enjoyment of a good, quiet conſcience, the enjoyment of a virtuous heart and life, the enjoyment of the pleaſures of beneficence, the enjoyment of a fervent devotion, the enjoyment of an aſſured, delightful proſpect into a better world, prefer theſe enjoyments to all the marks of reſpect, all the pleaſures and amuſements that occupy the ſenſes more than the mind, gratify the eyes more than the heart, produce more tumult than ſerenity, and ſhed more falſe luſtre than genial light around them. Seek only that, revere and love only that, ſtrive only for that which can calm, rejoice and bleſs you at every time, in every ſtate, in ſilence as well as in noiſe, in the hour of reflection and devo-

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tion as in the hour of recreation, in death as in life, in the future as in the preſent world. By theſe means, with ſuch ſentiments and efforts, ye will as certainly be happy and always become more happy, as certainly as God, the father and giver of all happineſs, has promiſed it by his ſon Jeſus.

SERMON XLVII.

Arguments againſt Vanity.

GOD, our appointment is truly great; and thy goodneſs leaves us in no want either of means or encouragements for being and continually more completely becoming that for which thou haſt deſigned us. Intelligent, wiſe, virtuous beings; creatures, raiſing themſelves from one ſtage of perfection and bleſſedneſs to another, thus ever coming nearer to thee, their creator and father, and ever farther qualifying themſelves for a ſuperior better life, and for communion with thee: are what we all might and ſhould become. Hereto haſt thou called us as men and as chriſtians. Hereto haſt thou given us, in thy ſon Jeſus, the moſt perfect precurſor and leader. But alas, too frequently, o God, too frequently we loſe ſight of him and of our appointment, and of the dignity of our nature and the grand purpoſes of thy wiſe bounty; forget what we are and ought to be; think, judge, act, as ignobly, as meanly as though we were creatures

quite different, far inferior ſpecies; inſtead of wing ourſelves to be guided by that generous ition, that avidity for real, durable perfection, ch thou haſt planted in our hearts, ſubmitting be governed by childiſh vanity; and thus, in- d of riſing, are ever falling lower! God of all cies, do thou preſerve our nature, the work of hands, from its total downfall. Do thou raiſe gain, by teaching us to think more juſtly, to re after better and worthier objects, and to run ı glad precipitance, with unabated ardour to- ds the glorious mark which thou haſt ſet before

Let us always perceive more plainly the folly the danger of whatever has a tendency to rt us from it, and ever avoid it with greater tion. Bleſs to this end the inſtruction now to lelivered. Grant that we may thoroughly per- e and feel its truth, accept it freely, lay it up good heart and make a faithful uſe of it. For his we beſeech thee as the votaries of thy ſon s, addreſſing thee further in his name and ds: Our father, &c.

PHILLIPP. ii. 3.

Let nothing be done through vain-glory.

THERE are faults and vices, my pious hearers, which ſo manifeſtly appear to be what they really are, and the ſhameful nature and injurious effects whereof preſent themſelves ſo clearly to the eyes of every one not totally thoughtleſs, that none will venture a word in their behalf; which wherever they are found, and under whatever form they aſſume, we immediately pronounce to be faults and vices, and abhor them as ſuch, or at leaſt account them worthy of deteſtation and abhorrence. This is the caſe, for example, with robbery, murder, perjury, avarice, lying, open vengeance, the groſſer and more depraved kinds of intemperance and voluptuouſneſs. Their very name is infamy; the bare ſuſpicion of them pollutes; and their baleful influence on the welfare of the whole community is ſo undeniable and apparent, that they are uniformly oppoſed by the majority, and therefore can never become univerſally prevalent, nor dare to hold up their heads in public without exciting horror.

But there are alſo other faults and vices, my pious hearers, that are ſo ſeldom entirely taken for what they are; that artfully lurk under ſuch a variety of harmleſs, or agreeable and ſeducing forms;

and

and whoſe pernicious conſequences are ſo little ſtriking, and ſo little affect the generality of mankind: that we ſee them ſpring up, extend, multiply, and by little and little become continually more prevalent and univerſal, without expreſſing the ſmalleſt concern whether ſociety in general or individuals in particular, are likely to be injured by them or not. To this claſs, for inſtance, belong levity, a propenſity to a life of diſſipation, an extravagant fondneſs for ſocial pleaſures and paſtimes, pomp, luxury, pride, vanity. All of them faults and vices which the more eaſily ſtrike root, and tend more ſurely to become predominant, as their exterior is ſo very deceitful; as the ideas we are apt to form of them are ſo vague and fluctuating; as they excite ſo little dread and abhorrence, and conſequently meet with ſo little reſiſtance. But do they therefore ceaſe to be what they are? Do they therefore effect leſs miſchief, becauſe they do not occaſion it directly, not immediately, not in ſo ſhocking and diſguſting a way, but more ſilently, more ſlowly, and more unobſervedly? Are not their attacks on our welfare the more dangerous, as they do not openly lay ſiege to it, but undermine it by ſtealth? And now if, notwithſtanding all our ſecurity and indifference, there be ſtill real danger, nearer or remoter danger, ought not at leaſt the public teachers of wiſdom and religion to advertiſe us of it? Nay, they ſhould not only watch with us, but even for us; and watch even then

when the generality abandon themſelves to an improvident and heedleſs ſlumber!

Well then, my pious hearers, allow me to perform that office to-day in reference to one of the fore-mentioned faults; and this fault is Vanity. To me it appears more dangerous than perhaps it may ſeem to you. Probably I may have reflected more upon it, and more impartially than many of you. At leaſt it is my duty to tell you what bad and miſchievous effects I apprehend from it; and it is your parts to ſee, that they be prevented or removed. — It is not petulance, but affection, that may you firmly believe, ſincere and real affection for you, my dear hearers, an earneſt deſire of promoting your intrinſic perfection, which has ſuggeſted to me all I have to ſay on the ſubject; and in the ſame diſpoſitions I hope you will hear and profit by it. I ſhall by all means avoid particular applications. They will be left entirely to your own judgment. The faults againſt which the apoſtle Paul warns chriſtians in our text, are the faults whereof I intend to warn you. He ſays to them, "Let nothing be done through vain-glory," or from a vain deſire of pleaſing. For making the propereſt uſe of this exhortation, I ſhall now do two things: firſt ſhew, what vanity is, how it exhibits itſelf, and how it becomes culpable and vicious; and then lay before you its miſchievous effects, and thus furniſh you with the neceſſary weapons for warring againſt it.

Confound

Confound not vanity with legitimate and generous emulation. This gives an impulſe to us along the paths of wiſdom, of virtue, of a beneficent and generally uſeful life, to ſtrive at obtaining the eſteem of our countrymen and of mankind, or rather to make ourſelves worthy of it, whether we ſucceed or not: the other, vanity, inclines us to ſeek pre-eminence in all things, and particularly in trivial, unimportant, or abſolutely inſignificant matters; to be ever hankering after approbation and praiſe; and accordingly to place all that has any value only in regard to us, and only in any way belongs to us, or ſtands in connexion with us, in the moſt favourable point of view, and by all manner of means to give it conſequence.

Neither confound vanity with pride or haughtineſs. They are both faults, but faults not entirely alike; and not always found together. Each may ſubſiſt of itſelf alone. If pride be not unfrequently connected with vanity, yet does it as often, probably ſtill oftener, exclude it; as vanity in return is very frequently, nay generally without pride. Many are too proud to be vain: many, very many, are only therefore vain, becauſe they are not proud enough, or have not matter enough for pride. Pride proceeds rather from the ſentiment of inward power, and the exorbitant worth and eſteem ſet upon it: vanity has more to do with external objects, which belong not to ourſelves and poſſeſs no intrinſic value. It is on this account a ſtill meaner

fault, a ſtill more ignoble quality than pride, and, on the whole, occaſions much more harm. However, the boundaries of theſe two faults cannot always be preciſely defined; they frequently run into one another; are often confounded together in common converſation; and, if in combating them we ſhould likewiſe confound them, we ſhall always be only taking one foe to our welfare for another, but never miſtake a foe for a friend. Therefore, to the point!

What is vanity, and how does it appear? Vanity has a very ample range; it ſhews itſelf in very various ways. It in general conſiſts in the deſire and the endeavour to attract regard, to be diſtinguiſhed from others, to ſet the talents and endowments of the individual in the fulleſt light, and to give them an air of importance. As various as theſe talents and endowments are, ſo various are the kinds and exhibitions of vanity. Thus the witty cauſe their wit, the rich their riches, the great their grandeur, to ſhine before men. Thus beauty endeavours to make others feel its ſway, accompliſhments their charms, talents their claims on admiration, ſcience its influence on the human mind, ſometimes, even virtue her inherent authority over the human heart, and by the diſplay and uſe of their privileges to acquire eſteem, approbation, praiſe, ſubmiſſion, reverence; and if from ſuch motives and in ſuch views, they ſpeak, keep ſilence, act, ſhew themſelves, then vanity mixes with the behaviour

haviour of the virtuous, the learned, the ſkilful, the accompliſhed, or the fair: and if theſe motives, theſe views determine frequently, if they habitually influence their diſcourſes and actions, if they have greater weight with them, and act more forcibly upon them, than love towards what is good and true, more than the deſire to pleaſe God, and to be uſeful to their fellow-beings; then does this vanity with them become a vice, and deprive their advantages of the greateſt part of their value. —

We ſhould cloſely attend to this diſtinction, my pious hearers. The deſire of pleaſing is natural to us all; it incites us all to ſhew ourſelves to others on the beſt ſide; and to it we are undoubtedly indebted for many gratifications and advantages, more eſpecially in regard to ſocial intercourſe. It prevents many ſallies of baſe and hurtful paſſions; ſpares us the diſguſting ſight of many indecent and vulgar ſcenes; leſſens the number of ſcandals and offences in the world; frequently gives riſe to good actions; may even by imperceptible degrees have a ſalutary influence on the diſpoſitions of mankind; and is always a homage paid to virtue and to the dignity of our nature. So long as this propenſity is not the principal, not the leading propenſity in our mind; ſo long as it is kept in due ſubordination to what we owe to God and to religion, to truth and to duty; ſo long as it employs no unlawful means of gratification, none that injure and diſunite mankind: ſo long may we account it a

will be the moſt bliſsful amongſt the bleſſed, and take the higheſt ranks of honour, of power, of glory, in the kingdom of God.

Theſe, my dear friends, theſe are the leſſons, theſe the declarations of the teacher ſent from God, the reſtorer of human happineſs. What concluſions are we now to draw from all this? How learn from it the way that leads to real happineſs? How follow along it our divine leader and precurſor? — Learn, — theſe his leſſons and declarations ſay to us, — learn rightly to diſcriminate between proſperity and happineſs, between proſperous and happy perſons. All outward privileges and endowments are proſperity; all inward perfection and the content and ſatisfaction founded upon it is happineſs. Jeſus is not our conductor to proſperity; his doctrine promiſes us neither riches, nor high ſtation, nor power and authority, nor a ſoft, voluptuous life. But he is our conductor to happineſs; his doctrines procure us reſt, content, ſatisfaction, ſpiritual perfection. Proſperity, of all changeable inconſtant things, is the moſt changeable and inconſtant; it falls to the lot of the fool as well as to the wiſe, to the wicked as to the good; forſakes the man frequently in his lifetime, forſakes him certainly at his death, remains for ever locked up in his grave, and nothing but the good uſe of it accompanies him into the future world. Happineſs is the end of the poſſeſſion and the enjoyment of all the goods of fortune; the only thing that is entirely

entirely and for ever our's; the only thing that can be the exclusive property of the wise and good; the only thing that, if it be once firmly fixed, neither death nor the grave can ravish from us; the only thing that we can take with us into eternity, and that we there may incessantly enjoy, incessantly increase. Strive therefore not so much to be prosperous as to be happy. The former rarely depends, the latter always depends on ourselves. The former is a gift of providence, generally dispensed without regard to merit; the latter is the fruit and reward of wisdom and of virtue.

Seek therefore your happiness, not in earthly, transitory things, not in riches, not in elevation and power, not in a soft voluptuous life. Seek it within you, and not without you. Seek it in the qualities and excellences of your mind and your heart, and not in the privileges of station, of rank, of honour and of respect. Reduce your appetites, your desires, your inclinations, your passions to order. Subject them all to the laws of truth and of christianity. Set bounds to your desires in regard to worldly things, give all your inclinations the best direction, let reason, let the love of God and man bear rule over all your passions.

Seek your happiness in virtue, in the willing and resolute performance of your duty, in unremitted exertion after higher perfection, in innocence of heart and purity of life, in a meek and gentle spirit,

in

judges; and all of them ſo, as ſome few perſons do, whoſe hap it is to preſcribe the tone. Accordingly, one will behave himſelf like the other, manage his looks like the other, dreſs himſelf like the other; and all ſo as chance, or the humour of ſome unknown perſon, or the folly and levity of a ſtranger, has thought fit to determine that men ſhall behave, and demean, and dreſs themſelves. Accordingly, each man a hundred and a hundred times belyes his taſte, his underſtanding, his feelings, for the ſake of doing what others do; is perhaps thoroughly ſenſible of the burden that oppreſſes him; ſighs under it in ſecret; knows not properly who it was that laid it upon him; and yet does not dare to caſt it from him. Accordingly, he always frames and models himſelf by others; is continually circumſcribing himſelf on all ſides more and more; allows himſelf continually to be bound with more bands; is continually becoming more and more unlike himſelf; and ſhews himſelf a hundred times in his aſſumed diſguiſe, for once that he appears in his native form. And hence neceſſarily ariſes a tireſome, diſguſting monotony in diſcourſes, converſations, judgments, manners, uſages; a fatal ſtop, or a very ſlow progreſs, in the development of the human faculties and capacities; nature is ſtifled by art, and the man is loſt under the multitude of caſes and coverings in which he is enveloped and diſguiſed.

Vanity,

Vanity, particularly in regard to external adſcitious objects, uſually implies weakneſs, want of real merit, a deficiency in truly reſpectable qualities; it is almoſt always the fault of empty heads, and little ſouls. It is conſciouſneſs that conſtitutes our moral identity. Whoever is alive to perſonal worth, as a man, as a member of ſociety, as a chriſtian, as an upright father of a family, as a worthy miſtreſs of a houſe, whoever knows and feels that he duly fills his ſtation, does honour to his office, conſcientiouſly diſcharges his duty, performs uſeful ſervice to ſociety: he likewiſe knows and feels, that he merits approbation, eſteem, honour; he therefore does not ſeek it with anxiety, makes no parade of outward, little, inſignificant advantages, which, when brought into competition with the former, are mere nothings, and which he himſelf can never regard as meritorious. But whoever is deſtitute of ſuch real advantages; feels no inward vigour and force in himſelf; diſtinguiſhes himſelf from others, neither by wiſdom, nor virtue, nor a generally uſeful life; poſſeſſes no actual merits; and finds himſelf neither fitted nor inclined to acquire them, and yet would make ſome figure in human ſociety, play a certain part, and force himſelf into notice and regard: he muſt indeed have recourſe to ſuch petty artifices, and endeavour, by his pomp, his garb, his decorations, his figure, his outward carriage, to conceal, or in ſome meaſure to compenſate, the want of real excellences and intrinſic deſert. A conſideration,

my dear friends, that ought to deter from vanity every perſon, in whom one ſpark of generous fire is left, any ſentiment of native dignity and power, and cover him with ſhame as often as he is tempted to ſeek his worth or his fame, in outward accidental things, that form no part of himſelf.

Vanity is thirdly the parent of innumerable errors; it hinders a man from rightly perceiving and calculating the value of things, and from honouring himſelf and other men according to the proper criterion, and from judging of every object as what it really is. Vanity is the ſworn enemy of truth, and the manly ſentiment. Wherever that prevails, there all determine to deceive, and all are deceived; there ſemblance will rarely be diſtinguiſhed from reality; every one is dazzled by ſhow, takes art for nature, grimace for ſincerity, lives more in an imaginary than in an actual world. What does not glitter is deſpiſed, rejected, though it were even the moſt precious of gems! That alone which ſtrikes the eye, which ſparkles, is eſteemed and prized, though it were even the flimſieſt tinſel! Where vanity prevails, there will wiſdom, in her ſimple attire, there will virtue in her native beauty, paſs unnoticed and unknown; and if they venture to ſtep forth into obſervation, they run the hazard of being hooted and derided. But folly, in her party-coloured, tawdry dreſs, and vice in her pomp, and with her gorgeous train, will command attention, approbation, eſteem, encomiums and reverence,

from

from all ranks and conditions of the vain unthinking crowd. I will ſpeak more plainly. Where vanity prevails, and gives the law, there will a man not be eſteemed as a man; there the rich man will be reſpected becauſe he is rich, and the poor man be ſlighted becauſe he is poor; there no inquiries will be made about wiſdom, none about virtue, but about appearance, incomes, and polite, engaging manners; there it is a matter of no concern, who is the kindeſt man, the uſefuleſt citizen, the beſt chriſtian, but who is the moſt agreeable companion, has the fineſt taſte, is the moſt perfect echo of the prevailing faſhion; there no one entertains a thought about merit, but about the ſpecious appearance of merits; there the cloaths determine the worth of the man; there are amiable vices, and odious virtues; there will ten moral faults, ten really bad actions, be more readily overlooked, than one ſin againſt the rules of good-breeding and faſhionable deportment.

Vanity is fourthly a manifeſt and continued affront to ſociety at large. The vain man is ſeeking for ever to blind us, to impoſe upon us, and to lead us into miſtakes; to diſtort, to diſguiſe every object, and to exhibit it in a falſe point of view. We are to take him for more than he is worth; to attribute to him more than he has; to truſt him beyond his means; to have a better opinion of him than he deſerves. He is ever buſied in extorting from us the eſteem and reverence due only to merit;

ever

ever ſtriving to appropriate the deference and reſpect, which of right belong only to wiſdom and virtue, to himſelf and his cloaths and his equipage and his borrowed outward ſplendour; or to ſteal away himſelf and his perſon from our merited contempt, amidſt the buſtle and glare that ſurrounds him. Certainly an affront that ſhould induce every wiſe and good man to be ſo much the more on his guard not to ſuffer himſelf to be cheated, and never to bow the knee before the idols of vanity.

This is not all, my pious hearers: vanity enervates a man: renders him delicate and effeminate; deprives him of all taſte for what is really great, what in itſelf, and at all times, is beautiful and reſpectable, the taſte for a noble, graceful ſimplicity; it unfits him for all difficult, toilſome, magnanimous actions, from which no praiſe, no renown is to be expected, all the domeſtic tranquil virtues, all generally uſeful activity in concealment; ſupports and feeds him with impertinences and trifles; teaches him to play with words and ſentiments with which he has no concomitant ideas and ſenſations; deludes him with lying flatteries; conceals from him the deficiences and wants of his underſtanding, and robs him at length of all ſenſe of inherent dignity, and a ſuperior deſtination. It keeps him conſtantly amuſed with airy bubbles; ever artfully rendering them of greater importance, and by that very means making what is really important always more indifferent or more irkſome to him. It gives every trifle,

every

every tranſient glare, every fleeting charm, ſo much value in his eyes, that he has neither time nor abilities left for caring about anything of conſequence, anything laſting, anything valuable.

Hence it follows ſixthly, that vanity, and in particular that which regards externals, degrades the man, and is in oppoſition to his dignity. And indeed, my pious hearers, when I repreſent to myſelf a creature ſuch as man, a creature that is formed after the image of God, that is ſo capable of greater things, that is immortal, that is ordained to a conſtant endeavour after an always increaſing perfection; a creature that is able to proceed ſo far in knowledge and in virtue, and may make ſuch various, noble, and in their conſequences unceaſingly profitable uſes of his time and his faculties: when I repreſent to myſelf man, as he truly is, and then call to mind one who employs a great part of the day, and conſequently a great, and that the beſt part of his life, in attending to his periſhable body, in giving his figure ſome additional charm, in properly adjuſting his dreſs, his decoration, his whole exterior, exactly according to the neweſt predominant taſte and faſhion; how earneſtly he reflects, attentively conſiders, adviſes with himſelf, chuſes, rejects, and chuſes again: when I thus figure to myſelf a man, — I muſt avow it — I am tempted to be aſhamed of this man, of my brother; I pity him for being ſo deeply fallen from his dignity; ſo far beneath his deſtination, ſo very forgetful of his high extraction,

extraction, of his affinity with ſuperior intelligences and with God himſelf, and that he is ſo little that which he might and was deſigned to be!

Yet more. Vanity, particularly in regard to outward things, is the ſtrongeſt nouriſhment to levity. He who has been frequently, ſo long, ſo earneſtly, occupied with trifles, who aſcribes to them ſo much value, is ever living and moving in trifles and among trifles, conſtantly making them the ſubject of his conceits and fancies, taking a zealous part in all the viciſſitudes they undergo, as well as in all kinds of ſenſual amuſements, often making them his principal buſineſs, how can he ever have a taſte for ſerious, truly great and elevated objects? how perceive and feel their worth, their importance? how ever become a man, and learn to think in a manly way? Is not his life, how far ſoever he may have paſt the years of youth, one continued, always renewing infancy? How can the thoughts of God, of religion, of a future and better life, find acceſs to him, acquire his utmoſt attention, entirely occupy his reflection, and preſent themſelves to his mind in their full effect? How can theſe ideas connect themſelves with all his affairs and buſineſs, with all he thinks and does in ordinary life, at home and abroad, and thus be efficacious to his improvement and happineſs? — How often on the contrary will his vanity call him off from the practice of domeſtic devotion! How often prevent him from participating in the public worſhip of God! How often diſtract him when

when there, and call off his attention to quite different objects from thoſe to which it ought to be directed! How quickly will the ſight of ſome object of vanity efface the good impreſſions he has there received! How inſipid will everything imperceptibly become to him, that does not relate to ſplendour, ſhow, gentility, elegance, play, amuſement, and the like! And where levity reigns, my pious hearers, how can a perſon become wiſe and virtuous, how a chriſtian, how can he labour with intenſe application at his improvement, how attain the ends of his being, how qualify and prepare himſelf for that ſuperior life, which moſt aſſuredly does not conſiſt in fopperies?

Where vanity reigns, my pious hearers, and this too is a highly corrupt effect of it; where vanity reigns, there alſo reign envy, jealouſy, harſh judgment, and ſlander. The man will not only ſhine, but he will ſhine more than others, he will ſhine alone. He will have the handſomeſt figure, the moſt agreeable manners, the genteeleſt carriage, the fineſt taſte, the beſt manner of life, the neweſt mode; is determined to out-do, but not to be outdone. With what acute and piercing eyes does he therefore contemplate thoſe who have the ſame pretenſions! How curiouſly does he ſpy out their failings! How eagerly ſwell them! How willingly does he hearken to the ill that is ſaid of them! How artfully does he diminiſh or diſguiſe what is good or beautiful, or eminent in them! And when

when he is not able to do this, when he is forced to do them juſtice, whether he will or no; does he ſee them with the ſame hearty, brotherly benevolence with which the wiſe man and the chriſtian behold whatever is beautiful and good? Does he then feel no mortifications of his ſelf-love? Is he not thus frequently deprived of all ſocial pleaſure? And may then no emotions of hatred and animoſity ariſe in his heart? no ſecret grudge have birth? May not the affection we owe to each other, as men and as chriſtians, be weakened? Are not however all theſe low, diſgraceful paſſions; and muſt not vanity, which engenders and feeds them all, be low and diſgraceful too?

In fine, my pious hearers, vanity is in direct oppoſition to the ſpirit of chriſtianity. Chriſtianity, which every where preaches to us modeſty and meekneſs; which requires us to be virtuous in ſilence, and to endeavour rather at pleaſing God than man, to look rather at inviſible than viſible things. What beautiful precepts on this head do the apoſtles of our Lord particularly addreſs to the profeſſors of the chriſtian doctrine that are of the ſofter ſex! They are to diſtinguiſh themſelves from others, not by the putting on of coſtly apparel, but by good and generous actions. And whoever does ſo, whoever aims at this diſtinction, needs none of the arts of vanity for procuring eſteem and honour. They are to adorn the hidden man of the heart, that which is not corrupt-

ible,

ible, to adorn their minds with knowledge, with wiſdom, with virtue, and to excell others in the ornament of a meek and quiet ſpirit. This, ſays the apoſtle, is in the ſight of God of great price; this is, even in his eyes, of great value; this pleaſes him, on whoſe judgment and complacency all depends.

And what an example on this head has Jeſus alſo left us! Not only of no foreign, borrowed, exterior privilege did he boaſt; no, he boaſted not of even real, intrinſic, truly great prerogatives: he rather concealed them; uſed them not in empty views; never did anything for the ſake of being admired; diſplayed his wiſdom and his ſuperior perceptions, not for aſtoniſhing, but for awakening his hearers. — Were it poſſible, that a vain man ſhould poſſeſs but even a ſmall portion of the power and prerogatives of Jeſus, what regard, what noiſe, would he excite with it! How much would he obſcure, confound, and lay proſtrate all about him! — How far was our Lord from all faults and weakneſſes of this kind! How juſtly did he judge of the value of men and things! No ſpecious appearance could deceive him; no approbation, no applauſe could dazzle him: truth, intrinſic goodneſs, ſincerity and uprightneſs, were all with him. And how little did he ſeek his own! How much he forgot himſelf in his zeal for the ſalvation of his brethren! — — And we, my pious hearers, it behoves us to conſider,

how are we to be chriſtians, the ſcholars, the followers, the friends of this Jeſus, in ſome ſort filling his place among mankind, while we allow ourſelves to be governed by vanity; while we are anxiouſly protruding and diſplaying, by all poſſible means, every true and falſe, every perſonal and borrowed advantage, and more particularly outward and moſt inſignificant things, and thus loſing time and ability and inclination for better and more noble concerns, for truly chriſtian exerciſes and actions! No, no, from all that we have ſeen upon a juſt eſtimate of the matter, it follows, that vanity is manifeſtly in oppoſition to chriſtianity, as well as to reaſon; is in oppoſition to the dignity of human nature, to our intrinſic perfection, to the good of the whole community.

And now, let every man judge, whether it be ſo ſlight a fault as is generally imagined; whether it is not attended with the moſt corrupt and pernicious effects; whether we have not the weightieſt reaſons for cautioning ſuch as we love from this horrible ſource of folly and evil. — I am well aware, my pious hearers, that vanity does not yet prevail among us to ſuch a degree as it may elſewhere in capital cities and larger towns, and that therefore all its bad conſequences are not yet ſo conſpicuous among us as they may be there, and as I have repreſented them to be in its natural tendency. But, what it is not, and does not yet, it may and will, ſooner or later, become and do, if it meet with

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no reſtraint. — I likewiſe very well know, that the generality of outward things, that, in particular, whatever relates to dreſſing and decorating the body, in the abſtract are altogether indifferent; but in their principles, in the manner of regarding and treating them, and in the influence they may and actually have upon our way of thinking, they certainly ceaſe to be indifferent. — I laſtly very well know, that the ſingle expreſſion, "one ſhould not diſtinguiſh one's-ſelf, one ought not to be particular," is ſufficient of itſelf, with the generality, to defeat at once all that the teacher of wiſdom and religion can ſay on this ſubject. But how pointleſs ſoon would all theſe terrible weapons of vanity be, if only a few, truly wiſe, good and reſpectable perſons would unite together to ſtem the torrent, and content themſelves with the conſcience that they were actuated by the pureſt motives and aiming at the beſt ends, and the approbation of a ſmall number of eminently intelligent and virtuous perſons! What a mortal blow would thus be given to vanity! And ſhould not this ſoon or late be expected among chriſtians? — In the mean time however I will, as I ſaid at the beginning, make no particular application, cenſure none, preſcribe no laws to any, not peremptorily condemn or blame what, abſtractedly conſidered, is totally indifferent. My deſign has been only to furniſh matter for reflection to ſuch as are able and willing to think, and to ſtrew ſeed, that probably here and

there may fall into ſome generous hearts, there ſtrike root, ſpring up in concealment, and in time bear fruit. He therefore that hath ears to hear, let him hear! Amen.

SERMON XLVIII.

Rules for forming proper Eſtimates of Things.

GOD, who art eſſential love and benignity, and intendeſt and promoteſt only happineſs, how many capacities, how many means for being happy haſt thou alſo granted to us! Our ſenſes and our mind, nature and religion, the viſible and the inviſible, the preſent and the future, all open to us numberleſs ſources of ſatisfaction and pleaſure, all promiſe and procure us delight, all are deſigned and adapted to render us progreſſively more perfect and happy. Yes, thou, the affectionate, beneficent parent of the univerſe, provideſt for our body and for our ſoul, for our animal and for our intellectual wants, for our outward welfare, and for our inward perfection, for our firſt, terreſtrial, and for our ſuperior, eternal life, for whatever has a tendency to render eaſy and agreeable our courſe to the mark, and to ſecure to us the actual attainment of it. Father eternal, how condeſcending, how gracious thou art! How much haſt thou done for us!

With what parental care provided for our welfare! Oh that we but loved ourſelves as thou loveſt us, and provided as carefully for our own happineſs, as thou provideſt for it! Thou haſt made us rational, free agents. Thine is to decree, our's to chuſe between the good and the bad, between the better and the worſe, to diſtinguiſh between ſpecious appearance and reality, to elevate ourſelves above the ſenſible and the viſible, to learn to connect the future with the preſent, and in all things to do thy will. Our happineſs is to be the conſequence of our wiſe and good behaviour; and this is to give it firmneſs and ſtability, and ſweeten to us the enjoyment of it. But we frequently err in our judgment and in our choice; we frequently ſuffer ourſelves to be deluded by the ſpecious appearance of objects; we often let ſenſuality get the better of our reaſon; often prefer deceitful, fugacious, tranſient goods and pleaſures, to the moſt eſſential and durable advantages and bleſſings. And therefore it is that we are ſo often diſcontented and wretched; therefore we are ſo often urged to complain of the want of ſatisfaction and happineſs. God, merciful God, lead us back from our deviations. Teach us better to underſtand thy kind, beneficent purpoſes, and to think and act more conformably with them. Cauſe the light of thy truth to pour increaſing radiance on our path of life, that we may walk it with increaſing intelligence and ſafety. Grant that we may be always learning to form juſter eſtimates of

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the various privileges and endowments that we meet with on it, offering us ſatisfaction and pleaſure, joy and felicity, and always more diſcreetly to chuſe between them. Bleſs to this end our reflections on the doctrines of religion which are now to be delivered to us. Let us perceive and feel their truth, and employ them as a clue to guide us in the whole of our future conduct. We aſk it of thee as chriſtians with filial confidence, addreſſing thee further in the name of thy ſon, after whom we are called: Our father, &c.

PSALM, iv. 6.

There be many that ſay, Who will ſhew us any good?

MAN may poſſeſs a variety of endowments, enjoy various pleaſures, acquire various privileges, ſeek and obtain various kinds of perfection and happineſs; but all of them are not of equal value, and rarely can we poſſeſs and enjoy them all, and much ſeldomer all in the ſame proportion or degree. Theſe ſeveral endowments, theſe pleaſures, theſe privileges, theſe ſeveral kinds of perfection and happineſs, are not always compatible with each other. The acquiſition and the poſſeſſion of one frequently militates with the poſſeſſion and the acquiſition of another. The one frequently cannot be purchaſed

or acquired without the loſs or the voluntary ſacrifice of the other. There are caſes where I can neither duly cultivate and improve my mind, nor enjoy the pleaſure ariſing from the proper diſcharge of my duty, without weakening my body and hurting my health; caſes where I cannot maintain and ſecure my peace of conſcience and ſerenity of mind, without manifeſt loſs of ſome earthly intereſt; caſes where I am under the neceſſity of chuſing between the good pleaſure of God and the approbation and eſteem of mankind, between inward perfection concealed from the notice of the world, and outward ſplendid diſtinctions; between ſenſual and intellectual pleaſures, between preſent and future happineſs; and muſt relinquiſh the one for the ſake of the other. Perſons who act not upon firm principles, who neglect to take wiſdom and virtue and piety for their guides, are very liable in ſuch caſes to be confuſed and thrown into diſtreſs. The leſs a man knows of the value of things; the more he ſuffers himſelf to be dazzled by outſide appearance and ſhow; and the more wavering his ſentiments and inclinations are: the more uncertain will he be in this election; and the oftener will he prefer the bad to the good, the worſe to the better. To guard you againſt this tormenting and dangerous uncertainty, my pious hearers, and to furniſh you with ſure motives of determination in ſuch caſes, is the ſcope of my preſent diſcourſe. Accordingly, I mean to anſwer the queſtion in our text: "There be many

ny that ſay, who will ſhew us any good," what is the beſt on every occaſion?

We have already, at various opportunities, poized the value of the principal objects that relate to human happineſs, or ſuch as are generally thought to belong to it. We have inveſtigated the worth and excellence of life, of health, of riches, of honour, of ſenſual, of intellectual pleaſure, of piety, of virtue, of devotion, of religion, of public worſhip; we have examined the advantages of ſolitary, of ſocial, of buſy, of rural life, of domeſtic happineſs, of friendſhip, of liberty, of learning, and others; and we have found that they all abſtractedly deſerve our regard and eſteem, that they all more or leſs contribute to our happineſs. Let us now compare theſe objects together, or ſee which of them we ſhould prefer to the other, which we ought to ſacrifice or relinquiſh for the ſake of the other, when we cannot obtain or poſſeſs them at once. As thou wouldſt proceed ſafely in thy choice, my chriſtian brother, let the following rules and deciſory principles be recommended to thee.

In the firſt place, prefer the neceſſary to the agreeable and convenient. That is the foundation of happineſs; this a part of the ſtructure thou art to erect upon it. Of that thou canſt not be deprived, without being miſerable; the want of this only leſſens thy proſperity and thy pleaſure. It is agreeable to increaſe riches and to live in opulence: but neceſſary to have an unſullied conſcience, and not

to need be aſhamed before God or man. It is agreeable to be eſteemed by all men; but neceſſary to be aſſured of the good pleaſure of God, and to be ſatisfied with one's-ſelf. It is agreeable to acquire a various and extenſive knowledge of all that can content and gratify the inquiſitive mind; but neceſſary to be concerned about acquiring ſolid notions of the affairs of our ſtation and calling. It is agreeable to form various connections with many other people, and to enlarge our field of action; but neceſſary conſcientiouſly to correſpond with the cloſer connections in which we ſtand, as parents, as ſpouſes, as members of the community, and to be active and uſeful in the narrower circle wherein providence has placed us. It is agreeable to live long, and in the enjoyment of a vigorous health, but neceſſary to live virtuouſly and piouſly and habitually uſeful. It is agreeable to be decked with outward diſtinctions, and to be ſurrounded with a certain ſplendour; but neceſſary to acquire intrinſic perfection, and to provide for its conſtant improvement. It is convenient to be free from all kinds of conſtraint, to follow our inclinations of every ſort, to have others at our ſervice, and to divide our time between pleaſure and repoſe; but neceſſary to diſcharge faithfully the duties of our ſtation and calling, and to repay by reciprocal ſervice, the ſervices we receive from ſociety. All the former we may diſpenſe with, and not be unhappy; but with the latter not. Prefer therefore in all caſes, what is neceſſary, that without

out which thou canſt not be happy, to what is merely agreeable and convenient, what merely in certain reſpects increaſes or raiſes thy happineſs; prefer a good conſcience to all riches; the being well-pleaſing to God, to all human applauſe; the knowledge neceſſary to thy poſt and calling, to every other kind of knowledge; thy domeſtic and civil connections and relations, to all other connections and relations; a virtuous and generally uſeful, to the longeſt and healthieſt life without virtue and general uſefulneſs; thy intrinſic perfection, to all outward diſtinctions; thy duty, to all conveniences and independency: be ready to ſacrifice all theſe with joy whenever thou art obliged to chuſe between them. The former are neceſſary and eſſential to thy happineſs; of the latter thou canſt be deprived and yet be happy.

Prize farther, if thou wouldſt rightly judge and chuſe, prize thoſe privileges and endowments which thou haſt thyſelf acquired as the reſult and recompenſe of thy wiſe and good behaviour, at a much higher rate than ſuch as have fallen to thee, without thy procuring and without thy deſert, by means of ſome favourable concurrence of outward things; even though in the abſtract they may be far greater and more brilliant than the former. A moderate competence, that thou haſt earned by prudence and honeſt ſkill, by aſſiduity and labour, is of far more value than the greateſt riches thou haſt inherited, or haſt acquired by any fortunate contingence. The

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loweſt dignity, the moſt contracted importance, to which thou art raiſed by thy own abilities, and the ſervices thou haſt rendered to ſociety, confers upon thee more real honour than all the luſtre however great, accruing to thee by birth, or that can reverberate upon thee from the high and mighty with whom thou art connected. The pre-eminences of mind and heart, which thou mayeſt conſider as the fruit of thy virtuous efforts, of thy unremitted efforts after higher perfection, ſhould be dearer to thee than all the gifts and talents, though never ſo great, for which thou art indebted to nature or early education. The teſtimony of a good conſcience, founded on the inward ſentiment of thy integrity, and the recompenſe of thy blameleſs and prudent conduct, ſhould be of more account with thee than the moſt flattering approbation and the loudeſt applauſe of men, who ſeldom know thee thoroughly, and uſually judge more from ſemblance than from reality. The eſteem and affection ſhewn thee on thy own account, on account of what thou actually art and doſt, which is beſtowed upon thee as an intelligent and good individual, as a uſeful member of ſociety, ſhould be of far more worth to thee than the profoundeſt marks of deference paid thee on account of thy quality, thy office, or thy wealth. For all the benefits and honours that accrue to thee rather from thyſelf than from fortune, thou canſt neither obtain nor preſerve without the uſe and application of thy nobler capacities and powers,

without becoming actually wiſer and better, and more perfect; and this wiſdom, this moral benefit, this perfection, remains with thee for ever, abides by thee even when thou haſt loſt all thoſe outward endowments and privileges, when thou paſſeſt over into a ſtate wherein they will no longer avail, and ceaſe to have any worth.

Prefer thirdly, my chriſtian brother, who wouldſt form a right judgment of the goods, the pleaſures, the advantages of this life, of what belongs or is deemed to belong to human happineſs, and wouldſt chuſe from amongſt theſe things like a wiſe man, prefer what is in thy power to thoſe things which depend not on thyſelf, but purely on outward circumſtances and accidental cauſes. For the former thou wilt not ſtrive in vain; they are what thou mayſt aſſuredly, thou mayſt conſtantly have and enjoy: whereas, in purſuit of the latter, thou wilt frequently throw away thy time and diſſipate thy faculties, and wilt never be ſure of their continuance. It is in thy power to maintain the command over thyſelf, to ſhake off the yoke of error, of prejudice, of moral ſervitude; but it depends not on thee whether thou ſhalt rule over others, or be in ſubſerviency to them; whether thou ſhalt fill the poſt of commander, or that of a ſubordinate. It is in thy power, by a wiſe and chriſtian temper, to acquire the bleſſedneſs of a tranquil and contented heart; but it depends not on thee to enjoy the endowments of wealth, of might, or of exalted ſtation,

ſtation. It is in thy power to cultivate thy mind, to purify and to improve thy heart; but it depends not on thee to render thy outward circumſtances as flouriſhing and brilliant as thou couldſt wiſh. It is in thy power honeſtly and conſcientiouſly to do what thy ſtation and calling exact; but it depends not on thee to effect with it ſo much good about thee, and to have ſo much influence on the general welfare, as thou fain wouldſt. It is in thy power to diſtinguiſh thyſelf above others by integrity and virtue; but it depends not always on thee to exalt thyſelf over them by extraordinary talents and endowments, or by peculiar merits. It is in thy power to enjoy the complacency of God, thy ſovereign ruler and judge, and to rejoice in his favour; but it depends not always on thee to obtain the applauſe of thy contemporaries, or to ſecure the favour of the great and powerful of the earth. It is in thy power to gain the love of thy fellow-creatures by gentleneſs, by kindneſs, by beneficence; but it depends not on thee to be honoured, admired, promoted by them, or even to be eſteemed and rewarded according to thy deſert. It is finally in thy power to live virtuouſly and piouſly, and thus to prepare thyſelf for a ſuperior life; but it depends not on thee to perform a great and ſhining part on the theatre of this life, or to prolong it to the extreme point of the age of man. Waſte not therefore thy time and thy abilities in the purſuit of goods, of eminencies, of pleaſures, that depend

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not on thee, and which as often and ſtill oftener fall to the lot of thoſe who have never ſought nor deſerved them, than of ſuch as have earned them, and to whom they are due: but apply them to what is in thy power; ſo wilt thou never employ them in vain, and thy object, thy felicity, will infallibly be thy reward.

Prefer fourthly, if thou wouldſt judiciouſly determine between the objects that relate to human happineſs, or are reckoned of that number, prefer activity to reſt. Reſt, inert repoſe, is properly defect, properly limitation, properly the effect and indication of imbecility. Activity alone is life, is enjoyment, is happineſs. The more active thou art, and the more prudent, the more beneficial thy activity is; the more perfect, the more godlike art thou. Wouldſt thou then triumph in exiſtence, wouldſt thou be happy, and happy in an eminent degree; never purſue reſt as thy object, but enjoy it only as the means to greater activity; and prefer always that which proportionately occupies thy faculties, and which promiſes thee recompenſe and enjoyment after labour and toil, to that which leaves thy powers unemployed, which lulls thee into ſloth, and promiſes thee pleaſure or benefit that coſts thee nothing. Think therefore for thyſelf, and decline no pains and reſearch, rather than let others think for thee, and leave thee nothing to do but ſimply to acquieſce in their opinions and deciſions. Rather labour thyſelf, and

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by labouring exerciſe thy talents, than merely let others labour for thee, and enjoy the fruits of their labours in indolent repoſe. Prefer a buſy mode of life, an office, a truſt, that keeps thy mind in greater activity and leaves thee little leiſure, to any other mode of life, to any other charge that employs thee but little, or not at all, even though this be far more profitable and conſiderable than the other. Prize the pleaſure that is the natural fruit of thy reflection and induſtry, that thou haſt purchaſed with labour and toil, in the ſweat of thy brow, far before any other preſented thee by chance, and which thou mayſt ſimply enjoy, without any previous preparation and any deſert of thy own. The former will render thee far more perfect, far more contented and happy, than the latter; and no exertions, no pains are loſt, which conduce, to this end; but thou wilt find it gain, and gain ſtill abiding with thee, when the languor of inactive repoſe, and its ſurfeiting enjoyment, leaves thee nothing but melancholy reflections behind.

Wouldſt thou fifthly, my chriſtian brother, form proper eſtimates of the endowments, the privileges, the pleaſures, that compoſe the ingredients of human happineſs, or are reputed to do ſo, and wouldſt chuſe between them as a prudent man; prefer the intellectual to the ſenſual, that which renders thy ſpirit more contented and perfect, to what procures thee pleaſure and delight by means of thy ſenſes alone, or promotes thy outward welfare.

fare. Animal life, health and vigour of body, abundance of earthly goods, are undoubtedly deſirable objects; but intellectual life, health and vigour of mind, riches in knowledge, in wiſdom and virtue, are far, far more deſirable. The former may as eaſily become prejudicial as profitable to us; may as probably render us wretched as happy, and a thouſand accidents may deprive us of them; theſe are and conſtantly remain ſubſtantial goods; can never be pernicious to us; but render us continually and for ever happy. The former are without us, belong not neceſſarily to ourſelves; are only connected with us for a longer or a ſhorter time: theſe belong eſſentially to the individual, are indiſſolubly connected with us, and ſubſiſt as long as we ourſelves ſubſiſt. Never heſitate then to ſacrifice the health of thy body to the health and the life of thy ſoul, the riches that conſiſt in gold and ſilver to the riches of wiſdom and virtue, thy outward circumſtances to thy inward perfection, if thou art obliged to chuſe between them, if thou canſt not poſſeſs and preſerve them together. The former are only the occaſions, the means of happineſs: theſe are happineſs itſelf. Beware of preferring the means to the end, or of ſtriving as earneſtly for them as for theſe. Station, rank, power and authority, are certainly brilliant diſtinctions; but a cultivated underſtanding, ſteady rectitude, incorruptible fidelity, pious chriſtian diſpoſitions, a pure heart, a blameleſs, beneficent life,

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greater aſſimilation with Jeſus, an improvement in godlike qualities, are far, far more valuable diſtinctions. The former belong to thy outward condition, and change immediately with it: theſe adorn thy ſpirit, and are like it immortal. Let therefore not thoſe, but theſe be the ultimate aim of thy endeavours and deſires. Senſual pleaſures are undoubtedly real pleaſures, and when they are regular and harmleſs, are worthy of thy wiſhes and thy moderate purſuit: but far purer, far nobler are the pleaſures of the mind and the heart; the pleaſures ariſing from the knowledge of truth, the diſcharge of our duty, beneficence towards our brethren, advancement in goodneſs, communion with God and gladneſs in him, the animating proſpect of a better life. The former we hold in common with the beaſts of the field; the latter connect us with ſuperior intelligences, with the deity himſelf. Thoſe frequently leave ſurfeit, diſguſt and pain behind them; theſe are as beneficial as innocent, and never loſe of their value nor their ſweets. Therefore let the former not hinder thee in the acquiſition and enjoyment of the latter; let not ſenſuality, but reaſon, be thy guide in the ſelection of thy pleaſures; prize that which ſatisfies and cheers thy mind and thy heart far above all that flatters thy ſenſes; and make no heſitation to offer up theſe when thou canſt not enjoy them both. So wilt thou prefer reality to appearance, the eſſential to the agreeable, and fix thy happineſs on a ſolid baſis.

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To conclude, wouldſt thou rightly appprétiate the privileges, the pleaſures that relate to human happineſs, and diſcreetly chuſe between them, in caſes where they cannot ſubſiſt together; prefer the durable to the tranſient, the eternal to the temporal. Thou wiſheſt, not merely for a few days or years, thou wiſheſt to be happy for ever. Seek therefore thy happineſs, not in what laſts only for a few days or years, and then vaniſhes away; ſeek it principally in ſuch objects as are unfading and eternal. All outward things, that now proſper, pleaſe, delight thee, are tranſitory, are of ſhort duration; only thy inward perfection, the perfection of thy ſpirit, remains for ever. What is more uncertain than the poſſeſſion of riches? What more tranſient than earthly elevation, than the reſpect and the honour of men? What is more deceitful than their favour? What more fleeting and vain than ſenſual pleaſure? What more periſhable than health and ſtrength, than life itſelf? To what accidents, what changes and revolutions, are all theſe privileges and poſſeſſions liable? Who can confide in them but for a year, but for a day, but for an hour, with perfect aſſurance? And how inevitable is ſooner or later their total loſs! Nothing of all theſe will remain with thee in death and in the grave; nothing of all theſe will accompany thee into eternity; nothing of all theſe will retain even the ſmalleſt value in that better world to which thou art haſtening! No, thither thou

wilt be only attended by thy intellectual diſtinctions, thy good diſpoſitions and actions; there nothing will avail thee except wiſdom, virtue, integrity, a ſound underſtanding, a well regulated heart, a happy alacrity in the exerciſe of juſtice and mercy. Theſe alone are laſting privileges and endowments; privileges and endowments that are not ſubject to the viciſſitudes of things, which neither death nor the grave can raviſh from thee. If thou learn here to think reaſonably and nobly; if thou learn here to govern thyſelf, to conquer thy luſts; if thou learn here to uſe all thy faculties and capacities according to his will who gave them to thee, and to the good of thy brother; if thou learn to love God above all things, and thy neighbour as thyſelf; if thou acquire here an unwearied, effective inclination to all that is right and good, to all that is beautiful and great; if thou make at preſent the diſcharge of thy duty thy joy, and beneficence thy pleaſure: then art thou happy, and wilt remain ſo for ever, even though thou art neither rich nor great, nor powerful nor healthy, nor vigorous, nor of long life. Oh never forget then, that all viſible things, however brilliant and captivating, are tranſient, and only remain for a little while; but that thy mind is immortal, that thy future appointment is great, that this life is only a preparation for a higher, and that therefore, in regard to thy real felicity, thy whole concern is this, that thou advance the perfection of thy mind,

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anſwer to thy grand appointment, and render thyſelf capable and worthy of thy ſuperior life.

And theſe, my pious hearers, are the deciſive reaſons, theſe the rules that ſhould guide us in our judgment and our election of the objects which relate to human happineſs, or are ſo reputed, and will certainly guide us aright. If with regard to all the goods, the affairs, the privileges, the pleaſures and ſatisfactions of this life, we prefer the neceſſary to the merely convenient and agreeable, what we acquire by reflection and ſkill to what accident and fortune beſtow, what is in our power to what does not depend upon us; if we prefer activity to reſt, the ſpiritual to the ſenſible, the laſting to the tranſient and eternals to temporals: then ſhall we make no ſtep in vain on the path that leads to happineſs, and as certainly lay our hand on the glorious prize, as we purſue that path.

SERMON XLIX.

The Vanity of all earthly Things.

GOD, inexhauſtible fountain of being, of life, of happineſs, thee we adore in the profoundeſt humility as the Eternal and Immutable; and the thought of thee, our creator and father, prevents us, even under the deepeſt conviction of our vanity and the vanity of all earthly things, from being ſpiritleſs and dejected. Yes, we feel that we are extremely feeble and frail, and that all that ſurrounds us, is as weak and tranſitory as ourſelves. By every day that we paſs we approach nearer the term of our courſe, and with it the moment, when every viſible object vaniſhes from our view and ſinks into night. Though here thou conferreſt on us many bleſſings, many ſatisfactions and pleaſures; yet their tenure is extremely precarious, their enjoyment is but of ſhort duration. Nothing could ſoothe us amidſt this manifold viciſſitude, nothing ſatisfy our minds ever panting after happineſs, were we unacquainted with thee and thy gracious diſpoſitions

ſitions towards us, did we not believe and know that thou art goodneſs and love from everlaſting to everlaſting. Yes, in this ſentiment we have a firm, immovable ground of ſerenity and content. By thee we are, by thee we ſubſiſt, by thee we already enjoy innumerable benefits, and by thee we may hope to continue eternally and to be eternally happy. Oh might this grand, this bleſſed ſentiment be conſtantly preſent to us; might it be our guide, our inſtructor, our comforter on every path of our lives! How juſtly ſhould we then judge of all things, how wiſely uſe all things, how ſafely and confidently proceed to the proper end of our being! Oh teach us then to hold the things of this world for what they are, to moderate our wiſhes and deſires in regard to them, and to look more at the inviſible than at the viſible. Bleſs likewiſe to the promotion of theſe views the meditations we are now about to begin. Lead us to know the truth, and by the knowledge of it to become wiſe and bleſſed. We implore it of thee with filial confidence, as the votaries of Jeſus; and repoſing a firm faith in his promiſes, further addreſs thee, ſaying: Our father, &c.

ECCLES. i. 2.

Vanity of vanities, ſaith the preacher, vanity of vanities, all is vanity.

SOME truths there are which every one allows to be not more certain than important: and yet, in regard of moſt men, are as barren and inert as though they related to inſignificant trifles, and were extremely doubtful. Nor ought we to be ſurpriſed at this, pious hearers. Man, corrupted man, is a creature ſeldom conſiſtent with himſelf, and whoſe knowledge and actions are but too often at variance. Whence does this ariſe? He ſtands ſtill at general conceptions, which, becauſe they are general, affect him but little, or even not at all. He loſes himſelf amidſt the prodigious multitude of the particular objects to which they relate. He gives himſelf no concern about the particular relation every truth has to him and his moral ſtate, knowing beforehand that ſuch inveſtigations muſt end in his humiliation, his confuſion, his embarraſſment, his diſquietude. — Who doubts, (that I may illuſtrate what I advance by a familiar example), who doubts for a moment about the vanity of all earthly things? Who does not believe that our lives are precarious and ſhort; that all the privileges, endowments and pleaſures of the earth, are frail and tranſient; and that

that at length the figure of this world paſſes away? But, does the aſſent we give to theſe truths produce the fruits of virtue and piety it is ſo naturally adapted to bring forth? Does it render mankind in general humble, and heavenly minded? Does it moderate their attachment and love to that which is viſible and tranſitory? Does it teach them to make a faithful and conſcientious uſe of the advantages which God has given them, and of the invaluable time he affords them? Does it inſpire them with a true zeal in providing for futurity, and induce them to prepare for that never-ending life, to which they are every hour, every moment approaching? Does it move them to hold ſuch a conduct as becomes the citizens of heaven and the candidates for a bleſſed immortality? No, woeful experience ſhews us the contrary. Theſe truths are perhaps ſufficiently believed; but they are not thought upon with ſtedfaſtneſs and frequency enough; they are too ſoon loſt ſight of; they are ſometimes purpoſely baniſhed from the mind; at leaſt, we do not often with ſufficient attention and impartiality turn the intellectual eye inward, fix our reflections on ourſelves and our conduct: and hence it ariſes, that we feel not their ſalutary influence. — I conceive it therefore my duty, pious hearers, to admoniſh you and myſelf of theſe truths; and to devote the preſent moments to the ſubject of the vanity of all earthly things. May theſe meditations make a deep and laſting impreſſion on our hearts; may they have a bleſſed influ-

ence on the whole of our future conduct, and render us wise to everlasting happiness!

You know who was the author of this just and well known sentence which we have taken for our text; and when you consider the principal circumstances of his life, it will not be difficult for you to perceive that his judgment in this matter ought to have great weight; as it is grounded on an accurate knowledge of earthly things, and a long experience of their agreeableness, on one side; and of their insufficiency and emptiness on the other. Were it some gloomy moralist, some anchorite, or misanthropist, who, destitute of all the conveniences of life, from his dismal solitude, surrounded by the shades of death, called out to you, that all was vanity; you would probably vouchsafe no attention to his voice. His testimony would make little impression on you. You would be more disposed to pity him, than to submit to his precepts, and take his word in such a matter as this. You would pronounce him incompetent to decide on the value of things, which perhaps he had never seen, had never possessed, had never enjoyed; and which he only reviled, as you might imagine, because he was obliged to forego them. Is not this very often the precipitate and partial judgment you pass on the admonitions of your teachers, and by which you not unfrequently destroy their effect? When we represent to you all that is terrestrial and visible as empty and vain; when we discourse to you of the honours,

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of the poſſeſſions, of the joys of this world, as of things that deſerve but ſmall eſtimation and attachment; when we maintain that the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of ſuch things can procure no real happineſs to a rational and immortal creature; when we tell you, that we are here upon earth in a ſtate of exerciſe and diſcipline, and that this is not the place of our deſtination; when we exhort you principally to aſpire after what is heavenly and eternal, and to provide for futurity; with how many perſons do theſe declarations and admonitions loſe all their weight, becauſe they imagine, and that frequently without the ſlighteſt foundation, that it is in a manner from conſtraint, and more from duty than from conviction, that we ſo judge and diſcourſe; and that we probably ſhould ſoon change our language, were we thrown into another way of life, or if we were placed in different, and, according to the general opinion, more fortunate circumſtances! I will not now examine the weakneſs and inſufficiency of theſe ſubterfuges and evaſions; I will not ſay, that truth, virtue and religion, always remain truth, virtue and religion; and that they therefore always as ſuch deſerve our eſteem, our obedience, our ſubmiſſion, let their teachers and defenders conduct themſelves as they will. I ſhall at preſent only appeal to the expreſſion of the author of our text, againſt whoſe teſtimony no one, not even the corrupteſt of the worldly-minded, can bring any ſpecious accuſation either of ignorance or partiality.

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It is Solomon who makes his appearance as the teacher of the human race, calling out to deluded mortals, "It is all vanity, it is all vanity!" And who was this Solomon? Was he ſome unfortunate prince, who encountered inſuperable difficulties in whatever he undertook; who was hated of his ſubjects, haraſſed and perſecuted by his neighbours; who, by a long ſeries of diſappointments, had loſt all heart and taſte for every beautiful and charming object of the earth; or who knew not the more refined and nobler ſatisfactions of life? No. He was, as hiſtory informs us, the wiſeſt and the happieſt monarch of his times. Beloved of his ſubjects, feared by his neighbours, reſpected by remoter nations, he enjoyed a flouriſhing and uninterrupted proſperity. The moſt extenſive and uncommon knowledge adorned his mind; and his power left him in want of no reſource for executing and extending his views, and for ſatisfying his deſires, if they were to be ſatisfied. The ſplendour and magnificence of his court, the exuberance of his treaſures, and the wiſdom he diſplayed in his actions and diſcourſes, made his very name renowned in foreign lands. "His wiſdom, as the ſcripture ſpeaks, excelled the wiſdom of all the children of the eaſt country, and all the wiſdom of Egypt. Nay, he was wiſer than all men." With theſe advantages he poſſeſſed whatever can flatter the ſenſes, all that his heart could deſire to ſatiate him with a ſuperfluity of joy. To him no kind of pleaſure was unknown;

unknown; and his days were ſpent in jollity and mirth. Hear how he expreſſes himſelf on this ſubject: "I made me great works; I builded me houſes; I planted me vineyards; I made me gardens and orchards, and planted trees in them of all kinds of fruits. I made me pools of water, to water therewith the wood that bringeth forth trees: I got me ſervants and maidens, and had ſervants born in my houſe; alſo I had great poſſeſſions of great and ſmall cattle, above all that were in Jeruſalem before me: I gathered me alſo ſilver and gold, and the peculiar treaſure of kings and of the provinces: I got me men ſingers and women ſingers, and the delights of the ſons of men. — And whatſoever mine eyes deſired I kept not from them; I withheld not my heart from any joy." But hear likewiſe what judgment he paſſes upon all this: "Then I looked on all the works that my hands had wrought, and on the labour that I had laboured to do; and behold all was vanity and vexation of ſpirit, and there was no profit under the ſun." This is what he alſo affirms in our text, and indeed throughout the whole book from whence it is taken. Ye who love the world and what is in the world, more than God, who place your higheſt felicity in the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of earthly things, and ſeek your entire ſatisfaction in them, what have ye to offer againſt ſuch teſtimony as this? with what arguments can you invalidate it? how can you palliate and juſtify your folly? Is it not of a tendency to make the deepeſt

deepeſt impreſſion upon you; is it not calculated to rouze you from your carnal lethargy, and bring you to reflection, when you hear ſo wiſe, ſo powerful and proſperous a monarch; when you hear the acuteſt judge, the moſt tranquil poſſeſſor of whatever is beautiful and charming that the earth contains, declare, "that all is vanity; that all is vanity?"

Yet his evidence, ſtrong and incontrovertible as it is, is not the only, is not the firmeſt foundation on which the truth of this poſition reſts. The very nature of the thing, the conſtant and unvarying experience of all mankind and of all ages, our own ſenſations, and the teſtimony of our hearts, ſet it beyond a doubt. We need only fix a keen and ſteady look on the conſtitution and ſettlement of the objects before us; we need only compare them together on their different ſides; we have only to aſk ourſelves how far they make us happy, for acquiring a thorough conviction of the juſtice of Solomon's aſſertion. Riches and honours, the pleaſures of ſenſe, wiſdom and knowledge, life itſelf, all is vanity. That is, all theſe poſſeſſions are fleeting and inconſtant; they laſt but a ſhort time; they are not capable of ſatisfying the human heart, of coming up to its deſires, and of procuring it a real and durable felicity. Let us examine them ſomewhat more particularly apart.

The greateſt riches are vain. I will not here take notice how much labour and toil, how many ſleepleſs

leſs nights, how many baſe and ſervile actions, how many abnegations of the moſt innocent pleaſures, it coſts the generality of mankind, to acquire a ſuperfluity. I will not remark what a conſiderable portion of their life is ſpent before they have reached their aim, how often they laviſh their abilities in vain, and how often they miſs of the goal towards which they run with the moſt anxious ſolicitude. We will allow that they have ſurmounted all theſe difficulties, and that they are in actual poſſeſſion of the greateſt treaſures. What ſort of treaſures are they? Are they not, in their very nature, fleeting and inconſtant? Are they not treaſures which moth and ruſt corrupt, which thieves break in to ſteal? Are they not treaſures which, as the ſagacious monarch obſerves, often make themſelves wings, and quickly leave their poſſeſſor? May not a man be deprived of them by a thouſand diſaſtrous events, which he is neither able to foreſee nor prevent; may he not, when he is leaſt aware of it, be plunged from the height of opulence down to the depths of poverty and indigence; and is he ever perfectly ſure that this will not happen? And will theſe treaſures follow him into the other world? Muſt he not at his death forſake them for ever? As he came naked into the world, is it not certain that he can carry nothing out? Can theſe things ſatisfy their poſſeſſor, be they of long or of ſhort duration? Can they make him truly happy? Does not conſtant experience convince us, that the thirſt of gold

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and ſilver is always increaſing in violence, and that it is never to be allayed; that "he who loveth ſilver ſhall not be ſatisfied with ſilver, nor he that loveth abundance with increaſe?" — Or can theſe poſſeſſions aſſuage our pains? Can they give us health and ſtrength when we lie languiſhing in diſeaſe? Can they heal our ſpirit when it is wounded, or remove cares and diſquietude from our hearts? Can they recover the loſs of a darling ſpouſe, an only ſon, or a truſty friend? Can they ſhield us from the terrors of death? Muſt they not rather make the ſight of the grave more hideous to us than it is in itſelf? How true it is, in all theſe reſpects, that a man's life conſiſteth not in the abundance of the things which he poſſeſſeth!

But perhaps the honour of this world is leſs vain than riches? Perhaps that may be more adapted to procure us an eſſential and laſting felicity than they? How egregiouſly, my friends, ſhould we err, were we to pay the ſlighteſt attention to this ſuppoſition! Wherein then conſiſts the honour of this world? In the favourable opinions which other men form of our advantages, of our talents and acquirements, of our virtues and merits. And on what are theſe opinions founded? But ſeldom are they the reſult of mature and impartial conſideration, a true knowledge of our character and conduct, an undiſſembled eſteem for the worth and virtues we poſſeſs. They are founded in general on an outward appearance, which vaniſhes away

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on a cloſer inſpection, or upon ſome fortunate incident, or on mean ſelf-intereſt, or on falſehood and deceit. One will honour us, that we may do honour to him in return. Another will praiſe our accompliſhments, that he may acquire the reputation of being a diſcerner and a patron of merit. A man will applaud virtue in others, that he may conceal the want of it in himſelf, and that he may be reputed among the number of her friends. We are often times flattered for the ſake of gaining our favour, our aſſiſtance, our ſupport, or for more effectually doing us an injury. And who are they whoſe approbation and applauſe compoſe what is uſually called the honour of the world? They are for the moſt part men that are deſtitute of all reſpectable and praiſe-worthy qualities themſelves; who ſuffer themſelves to be guided by their fancies, their paſſions, their fears and their hopes; with whom prejudice and caprice do the office of principles; who truſt to every ambiguous or doubtful report, and never afford it their inveſtigation; who frequently know not what is either truly great, or honourable, or noble; and therefore, according to the expreſſion of the prophet, call light darkneſs, and darkneſs light. They are men who, for the moſt part, only pronounce on the generality of actions according to their ſucceſs, without attending to the motives and the intentions of them; who admire and revere whatever is uncommon, whatever makes noiſe and parade, but

diſregard unoſtentatious virtue, and value not the truly great actions which the wiſe and good man performs in the noiſeleſs tenor of his life. What then is more fickle and inconſtant than the judgment of mankind? How ſmall a matter is neceſſary for making you forfeit their favour? How often does it happen that they diſlike, reject, undervalue, and condemn to-day, the very things they yeſterday approved and extolled? Is not hiſtory full of examples of ſuch perſons as have been for ſome time the darlings of the people, and on a ſudden have become the objects of their bittereſt hatred and moſt implacable fury? Shall then the honour and applauſe of this world, which commonly reſts upon ſo inſecure a foundation, which is diſtributed by ſuch partial judges, which is ſo eaſily loſt and turned into diſgrace, which procures us no eſſential advantage, which ordinarily, on the contrary, poiſons our hearts, and renders us inſenſible to the infinitely more precious approbation of God and our conſcience, puffs us up with a ridiculous and culpable pride, which at length muſt fade and be buried with us in the grave, can it ſatisfy our minds, and procure us a real and permanent felicity? Can it be anything but fancy, folly and vanity?

And muſt we not pronounce the ſame of ſenſual pleaſures, which ſuch numbers of deluded mortals take for their greateſt comforts? How vain, how fleeting, how inſtantaneous are they! The moment we begin to enjoy them they elude our graſp; they

they die, as it were, in their birth; and never anſwer the expectation of him that purſues them. We look towards them with the utmoſt avidity, we ſeek them with painful anxiety, we promiſe ourſelves the moſt raviſhing joy in their poſſeſſion, and eſteem ourſelves happy in the proſpect; but no ſooner is our deſire aſſuaged than we find ourſelves cheated; we awake, and the ſhadowy viſion, that delighted us in our dream, is gone; our rapture is turned into ſatiety, loathing, diſquietude; very often giving place to the deepeſt confuſion, the moſt pungent ſorrow, and the ſharpeſt ſtings of conſcience. The moſt exquiſite ſenſual delights by repeated enjoyment loſe their charms; and the contracted circle of worldly joys is ſo ſoon run through, that no diverſification is able to compenſate their inherent defects. Our ſenſes become enfeebled by degrees, our powers exhauſted, our paſſions leſs active, and what cauſed us at firſt the moſt delightful ſenſations, becomes preſently indifferent to us, or even utterly irkſome. We all find ourſelves obliged, ſooner or later, to "ſay of laughter, it is mad; and of mirth, what doth it?" But can pleaſures of ſuch a nature ſatisfy our ſoul? Can they ſuffice our capacious deſires which expand to infinity? Can we, without a ſet determination of deceiving ourſelves, ſeek in them a true, a durable happineſs, a happineſs ſuited to our capacities? Ye who follow your depraved inclinations, and lead an entirely ſenſual life, we appeal to your own ex-

perience. Can you deny it, that the pleaſures you ſo eagerly purſue very often deceive you, that they very often border on diſſatisfaction, and that it commonly follows them cloſe behind? Can you deny it, that you frequently feel a ſecret remorſe diſturbing you in the midſt of your delights, and embittering their enjoyment; and that your heart, amidſt all the pleaſures and charms this earth can afford you, remains empty and unſatisfied? And, if you cannot deny this, you confeſs that all ſenſual pleaſures are vain, and incapable of procuring a ſolid felicity to man.

But may not the pleaſures of the mind, which promiſe human wiſdom and knowledge to their votaries, be exempt from theſe defects, may not they be adapted to procure us what the others are unable to beſtow? No, my friends, they are likewiſe vain; "In much wiſdom is much grief," ſays the preacher, "and he that increaſeth knowledge, increaſeth ſorrow." And indeed, when we conſider how much time and toil, how much reflection, how much difficult, and ſometimes unpleaſant inveſtigation, are neceſſary to acquire what is called wiſdom and knowledge; and how little we obtain by the moſt unremitted application, and the moſt ſtrenuous efforts, how ſhort we fall of our deſigns, after the exertion of all our powers; and what a taſk it is to diſtinguiſh ourſelves by diſcoveries important and uſeful to human ſociety, diſcoveries that tend to its real improvement, from the great

multitude of ſuch as are called the wiſe and learned; when we reflect how many inſurmountable difficulties and obſtacles, how many enemies and dangers we meet with on the way that leads to truth, how often our underſtanding deceives us, obſcured by prejudice, or blinded by paſſion, how apt we are to take ſpecious appearance for reality, how often one ſingle ray of light points out to us the vanity of what we have been labouring upon for ſeveral years, and repreſents the moſt ingenious ſyſtem, which we held to be immoveable, as having no foundation at all but in the flimzy materials of our own imagination; when we conſider the infirmity of our reaſon, the ſhortneſs of our view, and to what narrow limits all our faculties are circumſcribed, how imperfect and inſignificant is human knowledge, in compariſon of what we do not, and of what we cannot know, and how obſcure, how vague, how doubtful and incomplete the moſt of our conceptions are; when we in ſhort obſerve that the wiſeſt of mortals are moſt ſenſible of their weakneſs, and moſt clearly perceive the ſcantineſs of their perceptions, that new depths are continually opening before them which they cannot fathom, and that nothing is competent to ſatisfy their unbounded curioſity: I ſay, when we ponder theſe things, we cannot deny the vanity of human wiſdom, we are forced to confeſs, that "it is hidden from the eyes of all living creatures." "The thoughts of mortal men are miſerable, and all their

judgments are uncertain." And how greatly is the value of this wiſdom leſſened by its being, like all other things, ſubject to inconſtancy, and of very ſhort duration? Let the ſcholar, the philoſopher, collect ever ſo great a ſtock of curious knowledge; let him underſtand all languages, all the works and monuments of antiquity, the whole compaſs of ancient and modern hiſtory, all the experiments mankind have made for explaining the latent operations of nature; all the conjectures that have been formed upon them; let him comprehend all the arts and ſciences, as perfectly as they can be underſtood; we will acknowledge his merits, and not refuſe him the honour that is ſo juſtly his due: but will he retain this knowledge in the grave? will he take it with him into the other world? will it there appear to him either ſo great or ſo important as he now thinks it to be? Certainly not. He will forget the greateſt part of it for ever. He will, if he ſtill recollect it, bluſh at his puerile errors, his precipitate judgments, his perverſe deciſions. He will conſider moſt ſubjects in a quite other manner, and then, for the firſt time, come out of darkneſs into light. In this reſpect what the Preacher elſewhere ſays is true; "There is no work, nor device, nor knowledge, nor wiſdom, in the grave whither we go."

And how ſoon are mortals overtaken by this revolution! Our life itſelf is altogether vanity. It laſts but a very ſhort time; and the greateſt part of it

it glides imperceptibly away, unuſed, and unenjoyed. We are continually advancing to the ſilent tomb, and to the endleſs ages of eternity; and before we are aware of it, we are ſtanding on the verge of our earthly career. We are on no day, at no hour, in no moment; ſecure from death. Neither youth, nor health, nor ſtrength, neither riches, nor honours; can defend us from this king of terrors. The unconſcious child, the blooming youth, the vigorous man, as well as decrepid and trembling age, muſt obey his call. But few reach the extreme period of human life; and the greateſt part muſt away before they have taſted the comforts, the advantages, the pleaſures of it: before they have well begun to live. And how far then is this period from us? Is it perhaps a thouſand years remote, is it whole epochas before us, which yet, when compared to eternity, would be but as the twinkling of an eye? No, "the days of our age are threeſcore years and ten; and though men be ſo ſtrong that they come to fourſcore years, yet is their ſtrength then but labour and ſorrow: ſo ſoon paſſeth it away, and we are gone." Can we then, in any of theſe reſpects, doubt in the ſmalleſt degree of the truth of Solomon's exclamation, "All is vanity; all is vanity?"

Have we however, pious hearers, reaſon at all times to meditate on this truth; are we never wanting in occaſions to remind us of it; yet the preſent day furniſhes us with one of a more ſolemn

nature. We have gone through another year. Short as that portion of time is in itſelf, conſiderable it is, however to man whoſe life is but a hand's breadth, whoſe eternal lot depends on the proper uſe of the years he has here to paſs on earth. What can appear more frivolous in actual exiſtence than the purſuits and occupations of childhood? Yet upon the proper improvement of this ſeaſon depend the wiſdom, the utility, the happineſs of riper years. Thus it is with life, which is the period of our education for a future ſtate, and unleſs we duly employ this time, we ſhall be more unqualified to derive happineſs even from the happineſs of heaven, than the moſt rude uncultivated peaſant can be to receive pleaſure or inſtruction from the abſtruſe reſearches of philoſophy. We look upon all our neighbours as mortal; we form ſchemes to ourſelves upon their deceaſe, but forget all the while that we ourſelves are to die. O fooliſh and infatuated race, will you always continue deaf to the voice of wiſdom? Will neither the inſtructions of the living, nor the warnings of the dead, induce you to ſerious thoughts? Will you continue to lengthen your proſpects, when perhaps you ſtand on the very verge of life; and can you enjoy the banquet, when the ſword hangs over your head by a ſingle hair? Who knows what a day may bring forth? The morning has ſmiled upon multitudes, who before the evening have ſlept the ſleep of death. The tongue

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of the preacher will ſhortly be mute. The ears which hear theſe ſayings may ſoon be ſhut for ever; and the heart that now throbs at the thought, may in a little while be mingled with the clods of the valley. Some who laſt ſunday worſhiped within theſe walls, are now gone to the eternal world, and heaven only knows how ſoon ſome of us may follow.

But ſhall we ſtop ſhort at the bare acknowledgment of the foregoing truths? Should we content ourſelves with the conviction of their certainty? A lamentable certainty this would be, if it were of no farther utility to us! A certainty that would in that caſe embitter the whole courſe of our life, render all its pleaſures inſipid, deject us at every the leaſt misfortune, repreſent death to us under the moſt frightful images, and entirely overwhelm us at its approach. Is it expedient for us to profit by theſe truths, we ſhould make a totally different uſe of them. They ſhould be continually preſent to our mind, and have a permanent, uniform influence upon our life and conduct. They ſhould moderate our eſteem and affection for the privileges and endowments of the world, and make us treat them with a generous contempt. They ſhould induce us to ſeek our happineſs and joy where they are only to be found, and to purſue with all our ardour the poſſeſſion and enjoyment of thoſe things that are conſtant and everlaſting. — And what are theſe things? God, my friends, God is eternal. He has always been, and will for ever be. His

mercy is unchangeable: it is the inexhauſtible ſource of light, of life and happineſs. Whoever is in communion with him, and may be numbered with his friends, mny promiſe himſelf an eternal, an uninterrupted felicity. Our ſpirit is everlaſting. If it had a beginning, yet it will know no end. It will never diſcontinue to think, to will, to be happy or unhappy. It will live when our body is crumbled in the grave, nd reduced to duſt and aſhes. Truth and virtue are eternal: no change of time can deſtroy them. They will ſurvive the conflagration of the world. They will be in the new heaven and on the new earth, what they are at preſent. They will then be the perfection and happineſs of all rational creatures. Theſe are things that merit all our attention, and all our cares. They ſhould therefore be the object of all our deſires, our views and exertions. If by the way of repentance, of faith and ſanctification, we ſecure to ourſelves the favour and complacency of the ſupreme being; if we make the redemption and the ſalvation of our immortal ſpirit the grand concern of life; if we ſeek in earneſt the kingdom of God and his righteouſneſs; if we ſtrive ever farther to advance in the knowledge of revealed truth, and in the practice of the chriſtian virtues, and to become rich in good works: then our happineſs reſts upon a ſure foundation; then we walk the way that leads to true enjoyment, to ſolid and eternal bliſs; then may we be tranquil amid the viciſſitudes of all earthly

earthly things, and behold with indifferent eyes their emptineſs and vanity. Then, let the heavens and the earth paſs away, let the elements melt with fervent heat, and every work of man be deſtroyed: we ſhall ſtill remain; we ſhall riſe above the ruins of a demoliſhed world, and our hopes will never be put to confuſion.

New-year's day, 1764.

SERMON L.

Of the practical Character of Jeſus Chriſt.

GOD, we are here aſſembled before thee to awaken in our minds ſuch ideas and ſentiments as may fit us for worthily celebrating the holy ſupper. Of what important, what ſalutary tranſactions does this ſeaſon remind us! How ungrateful, how inſenſible ſhould we be were we to remain cold and unaffected at it! It is conſecrated to the commemoration of Jeſus and his great work on earth; to the commemoration of our authentic teacher and guide, our magnanimous deliverer and ſaviour. And in this commemoration we find whatever can ſoothe, comfort, quicken and rejoice us! Light in darkneſs, ſtrength under a deep ſenſe of our weakneſs, fortitude in afflictions, hope in death! Oh might the image of our loving, ſuffering, dying Lord, who by his love, by his ſufferings and by his death brought ſalvation to the world, be ever before our eyes! Might all, and particularly his laſt diſcourſes and actions, be deeply engraven

engraven on our hearts, bringing forth in them fruits of amendment and comfort an hundredfold! — Yes, bleſſed be to us the commemoration of our divine inſtructor, who has brought down to us from heaven every truth that has a tendency to improve and comfort us, and has tranſplanted us from the regions of darkneſs into the kingdom of light! Through him we know thee, the only true God; and know thee as our Father, who loves us, provides for us, and even vouchſafes his grace to his diſobedient, prodigal children, when they amend and return to him. Through him we know the way that leads to thee and to eternal felicity. He has diſcovered to us this way; has cleared and ſmoothed it for us; has gone before us on it; has impreſſed it with his venerable footſteps; has confirmed his doctrine by his entire life and by his moſt holy death, and thus ſecured us againſt all fear of deception. Yes, may his doctrine be ever dear to us as divine truth; may it be the guide of our life and our comfort in death! Bleſſed be to us the commemoration of the Harmleſs, the Holy and the Juſt, in whoſe mouth was no guile, who never did wrong, who never did any thing but the beſt! Who went about doing good, taking under his care the ignorant, the erroneous, the ſorrowful, the wretched! Whom compaſſion and charity, light, liberty, relief, deliverance and joy accompanied in all his ways; whoſe words were pure truth and wiſdom, whoſe deeds the expreſſion of the

the ſublimeſt virtue! God, what a pattern of the height of human perfection haſt thou given us in the example of thy ſon Jeſus! How venerable, how amiable does innocence of heart, love towards thee and all mankind, an entirely virtuous, holy, generally uſeful life appear to us in the perſon and in the conduct of our Lord! Aſſiſt us then, o ſovereign mercy, in following him, in ſtretching after him, in gaining a continually nearer and brighter reſemblance of him, in ever becoming more conformable to him! For theſe unſpeakable benefits we humbly addreſs thee, and conclude in that form of prayer which he himſelf vouchſafed to give us. Lord, teach us to pray. Pray thou thyſelf in us. Our father, &c.

PHILIPP. ii. 5.

Let this mind be in you which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.

IN the words of our text, the temper and conduct of Jeſus Chriſt are propoſed as a model for ours, to the imitation of which we are under the ſtrongeſt obligations, and with which we ſhould conſtantly endeavour more and more to aſſimilate. This is a propoſition which in the ſcriptures of the New Teſtament very frequently occurs, is repeated on all occaſions, and earneſtly inculcated on chriſtians. Certainly

tainly it muſt be of the greateſt importance; it muſt be very cloſely connected with the deſign of chriſtianity; it muſt form an eſſential part of it. No doubt but it is, pious hearers. We render ourſelves unworthy of the name of chriſtians, we forfeit all title to the privileges and felicities combined with it, unleſs we follow the example of our lord and maſter, and uſe all diligence to expreſs it in our whole deportment. Indeed Chriſt had many prerogatives that elevated him far above us and all mankind, and which render it impoſſible for us to do what he did, in all particulars. He was the Son of God: he was an extraordinary prophet and teacher: the Mediator and Redeemer of mankind. As ſuch, he tranſacted many affairs and performed many actions which we cannot imitate; as neither our abilities, nor the relations in which we ſtand to God and man, nor our vocations, nor the circumſtances in which we are placed, are adapted to them. But the virtuous, the pious, the beneficent, and magnanimous temper which is the principle of all the diſcourſes and actions of Chriſt; the pure and generous views he had in them; the ardour, the fidelity, the reſolution with which he executed the will of his heavenly father, and the purport of his miſſion on earth; the humility, the meekneſs, the patience, the charity he diſplayed in his whole behaviour: theſe are what we ſhould propoſe for our pattern and rule in every part of our conduct. In theſe particulars we may and ſhould have that mind

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in us which was alſo in him; and ſo walk as he alſo walked. To excite you, pious hearers, to this, I ſhall endeavour by the divine aſſiſtance, to collect the principal features in the practicable or moral character of our ſaviour which are diſperſed in the evangelical hiſtory, and hold up to your view the charming portrait of his virtue and piety. May this picture, incomplete and defective as it will be, affect our hearts and be continually before our eyes! May it render virtue and piety truly venerable and amiable to us, and forcibly impel us to the practice of them!

I feel the difficulty, my friends, I feel how arduous a taſk it is to delineate the great, the exalted, the amiable character of our lord and maſter, and to place it in its proper light; and if I were ever deſirous of greater abilities and talents, of a nicer ſenſibility to moral beauty and excellence, it is at this moment when I am venturing on ſuch an amazing object. In it everything that is grand, that is beautiful, that is good, that is excellent blend and unite. It is a portrait without a flaw; a virtue without defect; an entire life compoſed of unſpotted rectitude, of unſullied dignity, of unremitted beneficence in ſentiments and actions.

Chriſt was perfectly free from all faults and failings. No ſin, no infirmity, no mean views, no impure motives, no negligence and indolence in good, ever once obſcured the luſtre of his reſplendent merit. "He was holy, harmleſs, undefiled,

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and ſeparate from ſinners." "He did no ſin, neither was guile found in his mouth." He could, with the greateſt unreſerve, appeal even to the teſtimony of his enemies; and ſay to them as he did, "Which of you convinceth me of ſin?" Peruſe, pious hearers, the hiſtory that the evangeliſts have tranſmitted to us of his life; and you will not find, either in his ſpeeches or in his actions, any the ſlighteſt indication of pride, or ambition, or hatred, or revenge, or ſenſuality, or any other baleful paſſion; but you will always meet with the plaineſt demonſtrations of the virtue that is in oppoſition to every fault.

How pure, how exalted, how conſtant and active was the goodneſs of our Redeemer! The profoundeſt veneration and the tendereſt love towards God, his heavenly father, filled and employed all the capacities of his ſoul. They animated and directed the whole of his conduct. Solitary and familiar converſe with that glorious being was the nouriſhment and invigoration of his ſpirit. He not only attended carefully and regularly the public worſhip while he ſojourned among mankind; he not only obſerved all the ceremonies of it that were of divine appointment: but he walked always in the preſence of God. His thoughts and affections were inceſſantly directed to him; he was conſtantly engaged in meditation and ſecret prayer; and neither the wearieſome labours of the day, nor the terrors of darkneſs,

neſs, could hinder him from paſſing whole nights in devotion.

His obedience to God, his heavenly father, was as voluntary as it was conſtant and invariable. "Behold I come, ſays he, to do thy will, o God! Yea, thy law is within my heart." He reckoned it "his meat and his drink to do the will of him that ſent him, and to finiſh his work." It was his pleaſure, his delight, to fulfil the deſigns of divine compaſſion, and to accompliſh the great plan of redeeming mankind; and this he infinitely preferred to all ſenſible pleaſures, all earthly joys. — His will was in perfect ſubjection to the will of his heavenly father. He humbly adored the divine providence in all its ways; he reverenced the wiſdom of the Moſt High in all the diſpoſitions it had made for the deliverance and the ſalvation of ſinners: he rejoiced in it, and acquieſced entirely in the good pleaſure of his father. "Yes, Father," was he heard to ſay on various occaſions, "yes, Father; for ſo it ſeemeth good in thy ſight." Even in the laſt and dreadfuleſt ſcene of his life, when he ſaw nothing but opprobrium and ſhame, ſorrow and pain before him; when he was ſurrounded by the terrors of death, encompaſſed by the pains of hell; even then he remained ſtedfaſt to the purpoſe of perfecting the will of God. He overcame the horrors which the ſight of theſe agonies occaſions to human nature, and ſaid, with the moſt abſolute ſubmiſſion,

"Father,

"Father, if it be poſſible, let this cup paſs from me: nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt."

What a pure, what an active zeal for the honour of the Moſt High ſhines through all his diſcourſes and actions! How exact, how careful, how indefatigable was he in the performance of the weighty buſineſs he had to do! How worthily did he maintain the character he bore! No ſlander, no malice of his enemies, could once turn him aſide from his courſe, or impede him in fulfilling the duties of his office in their largeſt extent, and with the moſt punctual preciſion. No obſtacles, no difficulties, were able to deter him from it, no oppoſition to diſhearten or diſmay him. His buſineſs, as the ſaviour of the world, was to ſeek the loſt, and to preach the goſpel to the poor. As the phyſician of Iſrael, he was to heal the ſick, and to ſupport the weak. And this he did at all times and in all circumſtances, though the phariſees and theologues deſpiſed and inſulted him for it, calling him the companion of publicans and ſinners. Never did he loſe the object of his miſſion from his view. Never did he neglect an opportunity of calling the attention of his hearers to it, and of inſtructing them in the purpoſe of his appearance in the world. If he heal the ſick, he requires them to have confidence in him as a condition of their recovery, as all the ſurpriſing actions he performed were directed to this end, to recommend his perſon and his doctrine to mankind, and to convince them that he was ſent from God, that

he was the Meſſiah. Do they bring him word: "Behold thy mother and thy brethren ſtand without, deſiring to ſpeak with thee;" he immediately replies, "Whoſoever ſhall do the will of my father which is in heaven, the ſame is my brother and ſiſter and mother." Do they give him the account of the unhappy people whoſe blood Pilate had mingled with their ſacrifices; he makes no obſervation upon it, but ſubjoins a weighty admonition to his hearers: "Suppoſe ye that theſe Galileans were ſinners above all the Galileans, becauſe they ſuffered ſuch things? I tell you, nay: but, except ye repent, ye ſhall all likewiſe periſh." Do they aſk him, from a culpable or an idle curioſity, "Lord, are there few that be ſaved?" He makes them no direct reply, but endeavours to call the attention of thoſe that aſk him, as well as thoſe who ſtand by, to more eſſential concerns: "Strive to enter in at the ſtrait gate: for many, I ſay unto you, will ſeek to enter in, and ſhall not be able." Thus had Chriſt his high vocation conſtantly before his eyes; and he was concerned about nothing except the glory of his father, and the work he had given him to finiſh.

But if the goodneſs of our redeemer was ſo pure, ſo lofty, ſo active, it muſt neceſſarily have produced the nobleſt fruits in his diſpoſitions and deportment towards mankind. And here, pious hearers, the amiable character of our lord diſplays itſelf in the moſt glowing colours. The moſt ſincere, the moſt ardent, the moſt unconquerable benevolence had full

full poſſeſſion of his ſoul: "Mercy is better than ſacrifice. It is more bleſſed to give than to receive." Theſe were the grand principles on which he built the whole of his conduct; and he teſtified the importance of them on all occaſions, both to his friends and foes. The view of the miſerable condition of his countrymen, in reſpect to their knowledge, their religion and their morals, excited in him the tendereſt compaſſion. The burdens their teachers impoſed on them, the wretched inſtruction they gave them, the diſordered ſtate of their public affairs at that period, and the far greater calamities he ſaw approaching, touched him uncommonly near, they filled his whole heart with emotion, they drew tears from his eyes. "When he ſaw the multitudes," ſays Matthew, "he was moved with compaſſion on them, becauſe they fainted, and were ſcattered abroad, as ſheep having no ſhepherd. Come unto me," ſays he therefore to them, "all ye that labour and are heavy laden, I will refreſh you." Even in reſpect to their corporeal wants he was by no means indifferent or inſenſible. "I have compaſſion on the multitude," ſays he to his diſciples, "becauſe they continue with me now three days, and have nothing to eat; and I will not ſend them away faſting, leſt they faint in the way." — Does Chriſt pronounce a woe upon Chorazin and Bethſaida; it is only as a warning to the inhabitants of thoſe towns, to rouze them to reflection and amendment, to deplore their unhappy condition, and to ſhew that he takes a

compaſſionate concern in their welfare. Does he ſpeak of the righteous puniſhment that is ſhortly to overtake Jeruſalem and its inhabitants; does he repreſent to them their obſtinate oppoſition to all the pains he takes for their ſalvation; he is heard to ſay with cordial tenderneſs and ſorrow, "O Jeruſalem, Jeruſalem, how often would I have gathered thy children together even as a hen gathereth her chickens under her wings;" how often have I offered you grace and deliverance, how often have I invited you to become ſubjects of my kingdom, and to take part in the benefits of it; "and ye would not!" While deſcribing the calamities he foreſaw advancing towards this famous but in the higheſt degree corrupted city, he diſplays the moſt animated compaſſion towards it. He laments that their preſent circumſtances would prevent their eſcaping them by a haſty flight. He even wiſhes them who ſtill adhered to the jewiſh ceremonies, and conſequently were enemies to his doctrine, not only no harm, but he gives them the moſt wholeſome advice: "Pray ye that your flight be not in the winter, neither on the ſabbath-day." Nay, even when bearing the burden of the croſs; when he was going to meet the moſt ignominious death; when he had the greateſt cauſe to complain of the inhuman procedures of his brethren after the fleſh; even then theſe tender and compaſſionate ſentiments were predominant in his heart: "Weep not for me," ſaid he to them that were affected by the lamentable ſituation

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he was in; "but weep for yourſelves and for your children." And who but muſt admire the greatneſs of his love; who is not forced into aſtoniſhment at the energy of it, when he hears the crucified Jeſus, in the midſt of the moſt cruel torments, addreſſing himſelf to God, "Father, forgive them; they know not what they do!"

But perhaps the philanthropy of our redeemer was barren and dead? Perhaps it conſiſted barely in kind diſpoſitions, in tender expreſſions, and good wiſhes? No. It appeared in a univerſal, in the moſt liberal, in the moſt unwearied beneficence. "He went about all the cities and villages, teaching in their ſchools, and preaching the goſpel of the kingdom, and healing every ſickneſs and every diſeaſe among the people;" or, as the apoſtle Peter expreſſes it: "Who went about doing good, and healing all that were oppreſſed of the devil." He went about doing good, is the hiſtorical abridgment of his whole life. Relieving the miſerable, healing the ſick, comforting the ſorrowful, inſtructing the ignorant, reforming the wicked, promoting the temporal and eternal felicity of mankind; this was his principal, his peculiar employment. Never did he refuſe his aſſiſtance to any that applied to him for it: never did he waſte a moment in heſitation about granting whatever he was aſked for, unleſs it were bad or unſeemly in itſelf. Does an afflicted father come and ſolicit his aid for a dying daughter; it immediately follows, "And Jeſus roſe up and went

with him." Does a humane and compaſſionate maſter addreſs him to heal his ſlave; his anſwer is, "I will come and heal him." Do they bring little children to him, that he may lay his hand upon them and give them his bleſſing; he ſays to his diſciples, who teſtified ſome diſpleaſure at it, "Suffer the little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of ſuch is the kingdom of heaven." The kingdom of God conſiſts in ſimple hearts like theirs. And he embraced and bleſſed them. Inſtead of terrifying the timid, or rejecting the feeble in mind, Jeſus, like a tender father, ſpeaks courage and confidence to them. "Be of good cheer," ſays he to the poor afflicted creature, who from modeſty would not venture publicly to lay her ſituation before him; "Daughter be of good cheer, thy faith hath made thee whole; go in peace." "Fear not," ſaid he to an elder of the ſynagogue, to whom they brought the diſmal tidings of his daughter's death; "believe only, and ſhe ſhall be made whole."

Even to the moſt unworthy our ſaviour was beneficent and kind. He had an affection for his very enemies, and did them more good, than we are wont to afford our friends. He knew from the firſt, ſays the evangeliſt John, who it was that ſhould betray him. And yet he did not ſtrike out the vile traitor from the number of his diſciples. And yet he vouchſafed him for ſeveral years his inſtruction, his attentions, his intercourſe, his friendſhip. And yet he honoured him with the important commiſſion

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of announcing the kingdom of God, as well as his truſty followers, and imparted to him as well as to the reſt the gift of ſhewing ſigns in his name. How peculiarly adapted was this magnanimous conduct of Jeſus to affect the heart of the ungrateful diſciple, and inſpire him with more virtuous and generous ſentiments if he had been capable of them! Yet in the evening, when he deſigned to execute his wicked purpoſe, our lord endeavoured to make him privately feel his reproof, and bring him to a better mind. "Woe to the man," how grievouſly I pity the man, "by whom the ſon of man is betrayed." And with what wonderful meekneſs does our maſter accoſt him when he comes to deliver him into the hands of his cruel enemies! "Friend," ſays he to him, "wherefore art thou come? Doſt thou betray the ſon of man with a kiſs!" — Nay, what an extraordinary proof of his magnanimous, his unconquerable love, does our redeemer give in dying for mankind, and voluntarily ſacrificing himſelf for our ſalvation! "Greater love, it is written, hath no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends." "But while we were yet ſinners, while we were his enemies Chriſt died for us." His beneficent affection, his unalterable tenderneſs, triumphed over ignominy and pain, it ſtood unchanged and undiſmayed in the valley of the ſhadow of death, and mounted thereby to the higheſt pinacle of perfection.

As uncircumſcribed, as univerſal, as unremitted as his philanthropy and goodneſs were to the human race, ſo tender and conſtant was his friendſhip. — "Lazarus, our friend, ſays he, is aſleep; I go to awaken him." And how full of affection was his gentle heart, when he came up to the grave of his friend! This ſight, and the lively idea of human miſery that it ſuggeſted, drew tears from his eyes. He wept; and the ſtanders-by exclaimed, "See how he loved him!" — With what a firm and generous friendſhip did he unite himſelf to his diſciples! A friendſhip which all their failings, all their infirmities, could neither diſſolve nor diminiſh. Having once loved any, he loved them to the very laſt. How pungently was his ſoul afflicted on thinking that one of the twelve, one of ſo ſmall a number, whom he had hitherto honoured with his confidence, ſhould betray him, by diſcovering to his perſecutors the place of his nocturnal retreat! How great was his ſolicitude for the welfare of his friends in thoſe trying circumſtances! "If ye ſeek me," ſaid he to thoſe who were come to take him, "then let theſe go their way." And what a ſtrong inſtance of the moſt exalted friendſhip did he give but a few hours previous to his ſufferings! Forgetful as it were of himſelf, and the dreadful ſorrows that now aſſailed him; unmindful of the ignominious and painful death that now awaited him, that he might ſoothe, fortify, prepare, and arm

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them againſt the ſcandal of the croſs. "Let not your hearts be troubled," he ſays to them, "you believe in God, believe alſo in me." You have confidence in God, have confidence alſo in me. "I will not leave you comfortleſs; I will come to you." "Ye now have ſorrow: but I will ſee you again, and your heart ſhall rejoice, and your joy no man taketh from you. Peace I leave with you; my peace I give unto you; not as the world giveth give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid-" — Only read yourſelves, pious hearers, the laſt diſcourſes of our ſaviour, which John has left us. I think you will not read them without tears. I am ſure you cannot without emotion, if your heart be capable of generous and friendly ſympathies.

But we muſt proceed, pious hearers, to remark ſomething of the other amiable qualities and conſpicuous virtues of our lord and maſter; yet, as the magnitude and excellency of the object will not allow us to trace a perfect likeneſs of it, we muſt be contented with detached and feeble ſtrokes.

How condeſcending, how friendly, how affable was Chriſt in his ſocial manners! The dignified gravity he diſplayed in all his actions and diſcourſes, ſo conſiſtent with his character, hindered him not from being acceſſible and ſocial. He ſhunned not human ſociety; he condemned not the indifferent cuſtoms he found in it; he denied himſelf not its innocent pleaſures. On the contrary, he ſometimes participated

participated in them; he honoured with his preſence the marriage at Cana in Galilee. He aimed at nothing particular in his daily converſe; but conformed on theſe occaſions to the eſtabliſhed uſages, whenever they were neither ſinful nor ſuperſtitious. "I am come eating and drinking," ſays he; I eat and drink as other men do, that is, without diſtinguiſhing himſelf from them by an auſtere and extraordinary abſtinence.

How admirable were his gentleneſs and indulgence towards his diſciples, as well as towards the jews of his time! They no leſs than theſe were imbued with the groſſeſt and moſt pernicious prejudices in matters of religion; and all his remonſtrances and appoſite repreſentations were not only incapable of removing, but inſufficient to weaken thoſe prejudices in any remarkable degree. They as well as theſe had ſuch rude conceptions, ſo little perſpicacity and obſervation, that they frequently miſtook his plaineſt propoſitions, and could not comprehend his eaſieſt apologues. Was he therefore fatigued with inſtructing and explaining? Did he deliver himſelf up to the impatience and dejection which any other teacher in ſimilar circumſtances would have felt and ſunk under? No. He bore with patience their infirmities and failings. He even did not always rebuke wickedneſs, when that rebuke would have been productive of irritation rather than amendment or advantage. He thought it better to redouble his zeal in inſtructing; he accordingly repeats

peats his doctrines, one while delivering them in this manner, and then in another, to adapt them to the capacities of his hearers. And when notwithſtanding his ſcholars did not yet comprehend what he meant; when they ſtill, after all his miracles, entertained a reprehenſible diſtruſt of his pretenſions; he ſhewed that he had more compaſſion for their miſtakes than anger or diſpleaſure at their inconſiderateneſs and levity. "O ye of little faith!" ſaid he on one of theſe occaſions, "why reaſon ye among yourſelves, becauſe ye have brought no bread? Do ye not yet underſtand, neither remember the five loaves of the five thouſand, and how many baſkets ye took up?"

What a generous and noble impartiality did Chriſt exhibit in his judgments on all occaſions! He eſteemed, he applauded integrity and virtue wherever he found them. Very far from condemning all ſuch as were not in communion with the jewiſh church, very far from pronouncing that all their virtues were but ſplendid ſins, we hear him publicly admiring the pious diſpoſitions of a heathen officer, and propoſing him as a pattern to others. "I have not found," ſays he, "ſo great faith, no not in Iſrael." "O woman!" (thus he addreſſes the Canaanite, who, with perſevering conſtancy, implores him to relieve her daughter,) "great is thy faith: be it unto thee even as thou wilt." Though that young man who aſked him, "Good maſter, what ſhall I do, that I may inherit eternal life," was ſtill far

far ſhort of perfection; had yet ſuch failings as rendered him unfit to be a follower of Chriſt and improper for the apoſtolical office; it is however ſaid, Jeſus, beholding him, loved him; he was well-pleaſed at the high veneration he had for the divine law, at his deſire to become happy; and he rejected not theſe good qualities, though they were not ſufficient to happineſs.

What a diſintereſted ſincerity and openneſs of heart ſhone forth in all the actions and diſcourſes of our redeemer? Does he endeavour to conceal or extenuate the dangers that awaited his diſciples, though he found them ſtill ſo weak in faith, ſo deeply imbued with numberleſs prejudices, and ſo totally deſtitute of courage and fortitude? Does he endeavour to attach them to him by cheriſhing their falſe but ſpecious hopes of temporal proſperity? No. He tells them expreſsly: "I ſend you forth as ſheep among wolves. You will be brought before governors and kings for my ſake; you ſhall be hated of all men for my name's ſake." And as for me; "the ſon of man muſt ſuffer many things, and be rejected of the elders and chief prieſts, and ſcribes, and be ſlain." Or, does he ſtrive to bring entirely over to him ſuch as had ſome eſteem for him, who were not altogether alienated from him, at leaſt by tacitly upholding them in their erroneous notions of his kingdom, and by concealing from them the hardſhips that were the unavoidable conſequences of becoming a follower of him? Nothing

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of all this. He tells them plainly: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs, and follow me:" that is, he that will follow me, muſt renounce all worldly pleaſures, and be ready to tread the thorny path which I purſue. "Foxes have holes, and birds of the air have neſts, but the ſon of man hath not where to lay his head." "Whoſoever he be of you, that forſaketh not all that he hath, he cannot be my diſciple."

But, though the ſincerity of our lord and ſaviour was ſo great; yet his prudence and circumſpection were no leſs conſpicuous. How often did he eſcape from the malice of his enemies; how often would they have laid hands on him; how often would they have put him in priſon; how often did they attempt to ſtone him: ſo often did he defeat their aim! How many captious queſtions did they propoſe to him, and how dextrouſly did he eſcape their wiles! He uſed the means true prudence preſcribes on ſuch occaſions. He frequently withdrew himſelf from his opponents, he retired from their fury, he betook himſelf for a time into a ſolitary region, and forbad on ſuch occaſions even thoſe he had healed to ſpeak of what he had done, leſt that ſhould irritate the ſpirit of perſecution in his wicked foes againſt him; that they might not deprive him before the time, of the power of doing good and of preaching the kingdom of God. How careful was he to prevent whatever might incite the populace to tumult, or to any violent enterpriſe! So ſoon as he obſerved,

obſerved, that, aſtoniſhed at his actions, they were deſirous of making him their king, he went and concealed himſelf among the mountains. And what a divine wiſdom did he ſhew in the anſwers he gave to the inſidious queſtions of the theologues and phariſees, who frequently attacked him in the deſign of taking him by ſurpriſe, and of having an occaſion to render him odious to the people, or guilty before the procurator of Rome! — At the ſame time, it was no worldly wiſdom he put in practice, no criminal ſubtlety, no mean device, for palliating the vices and failings of men, that he might gain or preſerve their friendſhip. Whenever the cauſe of God, the cauſe of truth and virtue, was in queſtion, then our redeemer diſcovered the livelieſt ardour, though he knew beforehand that he ſhould thus draw upon him the hatred and malice of the mightieſt and foremoſt of the nation. Read the xxiiid chapter of the evangeliſt Matthew, and admire the heavenly zeal, the majeſtic gravity, the heroic conſtancy, with which he warns the deluded people of the pretended ſanctity of their ſuperiors; and, taking from them the maſk of hypocriſy and feigned devotion, overwhelms them with ſhame and confuſion.

But, if his zeal on ſuch occaſions were juſt and laudable, ſo alſo in the higheſt degree reſpectable were the gentleneſs and patience he diſplayed on other occaſions, that related, not ſo much to the honour of God his father, as to his own perſon and

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his own concerns. His whole life was a continued exerciſe of this excellent virtue. Is he traduced by his enemies and loaded with the vileſt abuſe; is he withſtood by them in the moſt opprobrious manner; do they take up ſtones to throw at him: he never returns evil for evil; when he is reviled, he reviles not again; but meets their fury with a ſedate and ſublime tranquillity; and repells their unjuſt accuſations by rational arguments and ſolid replies. Would the diſciples, from too quick a ſenſibility at a ſlight offence, have him call fire from heaven to deſtroy the Samaritans? He ſternly rebukes them for their violence, ſaying to them, "Ye know not what manner of ſpirit ye are of. For the ſon of man is not come to deſtroy men's lives, but to ſave them." Do the diſciples ſhew ſo much indifference and inſenſibility at the very time when his whole ſoul was in commotion, and when he had moſt need of their comfort and ſupport, and notwithſtanding his repeated admonitions to watchfulneſs, as to ſuffer themſelves to be overcome by ſleep? He reproves them for it indeed, but at the ſame time excuſes it himſelf; and his very reproof is without anger, only proceeding from friendſhip and compaſſion. "What, could ye not watch with me one hour! The ſpirit indeed is willing, but the fleſh is weak." Your bodies are oppreſſed by fatigue. Is he at length arraigned as a criminal at the bar, ſtanding unpitied and alone, without an advocate to plead his cauſe? Is he, the greateſt benefactor to his brethren, moſt

ſhamefully inſulted by them, derided, crucified and ſlain? Is he ſuſpended as a felon, between two malefactors, on the accurſed tree, to be a mark for the general ſcorn and the moſt outrageous inſults? Even in theſe dreadful circumſtances he preſerves his ſpirit in a perfect calm, and free from all the diſorder of paſſion. Amidſt all the perſecutions he daily met with, the lamb of God appeared in meekneſs, in gentleneſs and in uncomplaining innocence. No angry, no malicious, no vindictive expreſſion, proceeds from his mouth; he prays for the barbarous inſtruments of his unmerited ſufferings in the mildeſt interceſſion that was ever offered up at the throne of mercy; he comforts a ſincere, though late repenting ſinner; he provides for his deſtitute mother, and for the diſciple who had always been his favourite; and then commends his ſpirit, full of confidence and fortitude, into the hands of his heavenly father.

All theſe virtues, pious hearers, all theſe merits were accompanied with the greateſt humility, and thence acquired additional ſplendor. Our redeemer was not oſtentatious of thoſe prerogatives which elevated him ſo far above all mortal beings. He held it not robbery, ſays the apoſtle, after the words of our text, he boaſted not that he reſembled God, that he was his ſon, his beloved, and in intimate union with him. On the contrary, having theſe pre-eminences, he laid them all aſide, and took upon him the office of a miniſter. He concealed his prerogatives,

prerogatives, he never made uſe of them, except when the nature of his office and the deſign of his miſſion required it. He ſought not his own glory, but the glory of him that ſent him. He aſcribed thoſe wonderful acts he performed, not ſo much to himſelf, as to his heavenly father, from whom he received the power. "The ſon, ſays he, can do nothing of himſelf, but what he ſees the father do. The doctrine that I preach, is not mine, but his that ſent me. The father who is in me, he doth the works. I ſeek not my own will, but the will of the father who ſent me." And what an affecting inſtance of his humility did he give but a ſhort time before his ſufferings, by waſhing the feet of his diſciples, and by condeſcending to ſuch ſervices as are only becoming to the meaneſt domeſtics! Nay, how plainly did his whole conduct ſhew, that "the ſon of man came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many!"

Theſe, my deareſt friends, are the leading features in the venerable and amiable character of our ſaviour Jeſus. This is the captivating example of goodneſs and virtue he has left us; and to which he has ſo forcibly enjoined us to conform. I am perfectly ſenſible, my friends, that the picture I have preſented to you is far, very far inferior to the excellency of its original; and I am inclined to believe, that it is not poſſible for creatures ſo weak and corrupted as we are, to do it complete juſtice. Can we however contemplate this picture, all imperfect as it is, without aſtoniſhment, without gentle

tranſports? Can we contemplate it without having the higheſt veneration for Chriſt and his holy religion, without being enamoured with the piety and virtue that appears in every part of it, without feeling a freſh zeal to act up to the bright example with all poſſible firmneſs and perſeverance? Unhappy they who can conſider ſuch a ſpotleſs pattern of moral goodneſs and rectitude without emotion, or without being inſpired with the moſt ardent deſires of becoming a tranſcript of it! Such inſenſible, ſuch groveling ſouls, muſt be loſt to all that is beautiful, that is good, that is generous and noble; they muſt be loſt to virtue, to religion, to heaven. Yes, my friends, if we would be the diſciples of Jeſus, if we would be happy, we ſhould thus be affected by the example of our lord. So will it by degrees deſtroy in us all the ſeeds of irregular and depraved luſts and affections; produce and ſtrengthen in us every amiable, every generous diſpoſition; inſpire us with a truly effective zeal in the beneficent actions which are well-pleaſing in the ſight of God. To this end, we ſhould keep this example conſtantly before our eyes, frequently examine ourſelves by it, and make it the model of our whole carriage and demeanour. We ſhould be like-minded with Jeſus, and ſo walk even as he walked. Thrice happy we, if we ſincerely do ſo, and perſevere in it even to the end! Chriſt will then acknowledge us for his adherents and ſucceſſors; and as ſuch we ſhall live and reign with him in the other world for ever.

Good-Friday.

SERMON LI.

Of the Imitation of the Example of Jeſus.

GOD, who haſt given us thy ſon Jeſus, to be a teacher, a guide and precurſor on the paths of virtue and happineſs, grant that his doctrine may continually manifeſt its divine energy in us; grant that his example may attract us to the imitation of it. As thou didſt commit to him the nobleſt, the moſt ſalutary work, the work of the redemption of mankind, thou haſt likewiſe committed to every one of us his particular buſineſs to tranſact on earth. Thou haſt aſſigned to each of us his ſtation, his calling, his field of action, in which we may exerciſe our faculties, be uſeful to ourſelves and to others, and promote the welfare of the whole. Grant that we, like the great captain of our ſalvation, may perform our work with fidelity and fortitude, that we like him may conſtantly keep our object in view, and be ever advancing towards it. Let us not indulge in ſloth, but lay aſide all irreſolution, all thoughts of fatigue. Strengthen us by thy good

ſpirit in our endeavours after permanent perfection and happineſs. Enable us conſtantly to look to thee and to thy will, and faithfully and gladly perform it. Bleſs, to the promotion of theſe views, the conſiderations that are now to employ us, and hear our prayer through Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe name we further call upon thee, as: Our father, &c.

PHILIPP. ii. 5.

Let this mind be in you, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus.

THE important precept of the apoſtle Paul, which we have read to you, and which we ſhould revere as a fundamental law of chriſtianity, has already recently furniſhed us with an opportunity for entering upon ſome meditations on the moral character of our beloved lord and ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt: on that occaſion we held up to you the charming picture of his virtue and goodneſs, ſhewing you what his mind and his conduct were towards God and man. The pureſt devotion, the profoundeſt veneration, the moſt ardent love, the moſt cheerful obedience to God, the completeſt reſignation to his will, the livelieſt zeal for his honour, an univerſal and unconquerable philanthropy, an unwearied beneficence, the nobleſt magnanimity, the tendereſt friendſhip, the greateſt affability

lity and condeſcenſion, the moſt perfect impartiality, ſincerity, open-heartedneſs, prudence, gentleneſs, humility and patience: theſe, pious hearers, were the principal lineaments of the picture that we preſumed to trace of the tranſcendent character of our redeemer. Though this portrait was extremely defective and imperfect; though far beneath the beauty and the luſtre of its original: it was nevertheleſs in its very nature adapted to attract our attention, to affect us and to excite emotion in our hearts. I truſt likewiſe, that at leaſt with ſome it produced correſpondent effects, by making a good impreſſion on them. We muſt indeed to a very great degree be corrupt; we muſt have loſt all ſentiment for what is beautiful, what is good, what is ſublime, if we are unmoved at the temper and conduct of Jeſus Chriſt, if they fail of filling us with eſteem, with reverence and love towards him, if they confirm not our faith in him and his divine doctrine, if they convince us not of the excellence of virtue and fail of rendering it venerable and amiable to us. But this is not enough. We ſhould not only eſteem and love virtue, but actually practiſe it. We ſhould not only admire the example of our lord, but actually follow it. This mind ſhould be in you, as our text ſays, which was alſo in Chriſt Jeſus. On this all depends. This is the primary object of the holy life of Jeſus, and the proper uſe that ſhould be made of it. This it is to which we are particularly bound by a partici-

pation in the holy ſupper, ſince we thereby publicly proclaim ourſelves the diſciples of Jeſus, and acknowledge him as our chieftain and lord. It will therefore be perfectly ſuitable to the deſign of our meeting to-day, if we endeavour, under the divine aſſiſtance, to excite you to the imitation of the excellent example of virtue and goodneſs given us by our ſaviour.

The method in which we ſhould imitate this example, and the reaſons that oblige us to it, are the two particulars in the conſideration whereof your attention and devotion will be employed. How happy will it be for us, my friends, how boldly may we preſent ourſelves at the table of the lord, and there receive the pledges of his love, if theſe conſiderations produce in us the ſincere reſolution to proceed henceforth in the footſteps of our ſaviour, and ſo to walk as he alſo walked!

We lately remarked that Chriſt performed many things wherein we cannot pretend to imitate him. He was placed in various relations and circumſtances, as the ſon of God, as an extraordinary prophet and teacher, as the mediator and redeemer of mankind, in which we can never be. As ſuch, he poſſeſſed prerogatives and abilities far ſuperior to ours. He could and was to do ſuch works as we neither can nor ſhould. But it is not ſo much the particular actions of our ſaviour, as the way and manner in which he performed them; it is his diſpoſition of mind and his whole character, which

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we are to propoſe for our example. We are to regulate our conduct by the ſame rules of righteouſneſs, of philanthropy, of magnanimity; we ſhould be actuated by the ſame pure and generous views to the honour of the Moſt High, and to the promotion of the general welfare; the ſame ſpirit of humility, of gentleneſs, of patience, of reconciliation, that actuated Chriſt, ſhould actuate us alſo. We are to practiſe the virtues he practiſed, though we cannot in all particular caſes give the ſame or ſo powerful a demonſtration of them. Every one of us ſhould ſtrive to fulfil the duties of his calling and the true end of his exiſtence, with the ſame fidelity with which Chriſt accompliſhed the deſign of his miſſion upon earth. We ſhould like him employ all our faculties in conformity to the will of God, and earneſtly ſeize all opportunities for doing good, and for rendering ourſelves uſeful to others, though theſe faculties and theſe opportunities be very different, or though they be ſeldom or never totally alike. Like our ſaviour, we ſhould bear all the trials which God lays upon us, all the ſufferings he diſpenſes to us, with ſtedfaſt patience, and meek ſubmiſſion to his will, though theſe trials and theſe ſufferings be, neither in their nature and quality, nor in reſpect of their intention, exactly ſimilar to thoſe which our redeemer encountered. This is to imitate the example of our lord; and thus even ſuch of his actions as were extraordinary, and ſuperior to our abilities, may be ſubſervient

ſervient to us for inſtruction and example. However various then and great the prerogatives which he poſſeſſed; however different his ſtation and calling from ours: notwithſtanding this, his life may and ſhould be the pattern and rule of ours. The condition of a menial ſervant is doubtleſs very much inferior to the ſtation of his maſter; we may nevertheleſs with ſtrict propriety exhort him to imitate the example of his prudent and beneficent maſter: not that he can give the very ſame proofs of prudence, of beneficence and affection; but becauſe he may diſplay the ſame prudent, affectionate, and beneficent diſpoſitions in all thoſe actions that are ſuitable to his condition. The caſe is the ſame in regard to the example of our venerable and amiable redeemer. A few particular exemplifications will beſt ſerve to illuſtrate this matter.

Chriſt came into the world to ſeek and to ſave thoſe that were loſt. He came to declare to mankind the will of God, to deliver and redeem them from their aberrations, to ſmooth for them the way to ſupreme felicity; and to this purpoſe he devoted his whole life. We cannot indeed do exactly the ſame. We are not all called to the paſtoral office, much leſs can we promote the ſalvation of men to the very ſame degree as he did. But does it thence follow that we can contribute nothing to that end; or, that we may be quite indifferent to the ſalvation of our brethren? May we not on one hand do harm

harm to our acquaintance by our imprudent and ſinful behaviour, ſeduce them into wickedneſs, or harden them in it? May we not on the other hand edify and incite them to goodneſs by our advice, by our example, by our affectionate ſuggeſtions, admonitions, exhortations? May we not by our conduct render religion and chriſtianity either contemptible or reſpectable, and is it not incumbent upon us, to avoid the one and to do the other? Have we not relations, friends, acquaintances, for whoſe ſpiritual and everlaſting welfare we are particularly bound to provide? Can we not then, and ſhould we not imitate our ſaviour in this reſpect, ſo as to promote, each of us according to his circumſtances and abilities, the ſalvation of our brethren, by contributing and ſtriving as far as we are able, to proſecute theſe endeavours with upright intentions and a willing heart, and to allow no difficulties to deter us from them?

Farther: Chriſt humbled himſelf to the loweſt abaſement. He quitted heaven and the glory he had with the father; he ſubmitted voluntarily to all the hardſhips and miſeries of life; even to a painful and ignominious death: and thus afforded the moſt aſtoniſhing proofs of humility, of ſelf-denial, and of obedience to God, his heavenly father. It is certainly impoſſible for us to give ſuch ſtrong demonſtrations of theſe virtues, ſince our circumſtances are totally different; and therefore we are not called to do ſo. Nevertheleſs, we can and

ſhould endeavour to imitate our ſaviour alſo in this reſpect, and we effectually do ſo when we teſtify meekneſs and modeſty in all our words and actions, and never boaſt of our advantages, or magnify ourſelves upon them; when we prefer the good-pleaſure of God to all the ſatisfactions and delights of the world, willingly acquieſce in all his appointments, and never murmur at his diſpenſations; in ſhort, when we are ready and firmly reſolved rather to relinquiſh all, and even to deny ourſelves whatever is moſt agreeable and delightful here on earth, than to tranſgreſs the commands of God, and to act againſt our duty.

Still more: our redeemer, as we lately ſaw, travelled about from one place to another, everywhere doing good. He reſtored the dumb to their ſpeech, he gave ſight to the blind, health to the ſick, life to dead, recovered the inſane to reaſon. All his time, all his abilities were devoted to advance the ſpiritual and temporal intereſts of mankind, and his generous and helpful love was glorified as it were every day and every hour of his public miniſtry by freſh proofs. Now, though it be utterly impoſſible for us to perform the ſame acts of beneficence which he performed; impoſſible for us to afford the ſame aſſiſtance to our brethren, to adminiſter to them the ſame relief as he did: yet we can and ſhould have, like him, a ſincere, a conſtant and effective inclination to do good. Like him we can and ſhould endeavour at becoming

becoming as uſeful to others, and to afford them as much and as important ſervices as our capacities admit. We can and ſhould, like him, make the ſacrifice of our private intereſt to the general benefit, and promote our neighbour's real happineſs to the utmoſt of our power; and when we do ſo, we imitate the philanthropy, the compaſſion, the generoſity of our redeemer, though we evince theſe virtues according to the various circumſtances in which we are placed, by different marks and demonſtrations. And thus it is in general with the other particulars in the life of Jeſus. The imitation conſiſts not ſo much in our leading the ſame manner of life that he led, and performing the ſame actions that he performed; as, in every event that befals us, being ſo minded as he was minded, in letting our mind be guided and governed by his, in framing our moral character upon his, in making his temper and conduct the model of ours. And how manifold and cogent are the reaſons we have for ſuch an imitation of the excellent example of Jeſus!

Firſt, this was one of the principal purpoſes for which our ſaviour appeared in the world, and ſojourned for a time among mankind. He came not only to purchaſe for us by his propitiatory death a bleſſed immortality and everlaſting life; he came not only to inſtruct us, by his divine doctrine in the gracious will of the Moſt High, and to admoniſh us of our duties: but he was likewiſe to give us a perfect and engaging pattern of behaviour towards

wards God, our neighbour, and ourſelves. He was to place the beauty and the value of virtue in the moſt perſpicuous point of view by his example, that he might incite us to the love and practice of it. He was to ſhew by his own conduct, that it is not impoſſible, even in a corrupted world, to lead a holy and a godly life; and that human nature, under the guidance and ſupport of the ſpirit of God, is capable of attaining to a very high degree of moral perfection. The expreſs declarations of our lord himſelf, as well as the reiterated teſtimony of his apoſtles, leave us no room to doubt that this was the deſign of his converſation on earth. How clearly the ſaviour explains himſelf hereupon, in ſaying: "If any man will come after me, let him deny himſelf, and take up his croſs and follow me. Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart. I have given you an example, that ye ſhould do as I have done to you. Whoſoever will be great among you ſhall be your miniſter: and whoſoever of you will be the chiefeſt, ſhall be the ſervant of all; for even the ſon of man came not to be miniſtered unto, but to miniſter, and to give his life a ranſom for many. This is my commandment, that ye love one another, as I have loved you." The apoſtles of our lord are perpetually enforcing the ſame. Would they incite us to holineſs; they give us the precept: "As he which hath called you is holy, ſo be ye holy in all manner of converſation." Would they encourage us to patience and firmneſs in afflictions; they bid us, "Look

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unto Jeſus, the author and finiſher of our
who, for the joy that was ſet before him, en
the croſs, deſpiſing the ſhame." They remi
that " Chriſt alſo ſuffered for us, leaving us
ample that ye ſhould follow his ſteps." V
they inſpire us with an humble diſpoſition;
ſay, " Let this mind be in you, which was
Chriſt Jeſus; who, being in the form of
thought it not robbery to be equal with God
gloried not in being equal with God. Woul
incite us to love, to gentleneſs, to placability
exhort us to " Walk in love, as Chriſt alſ
loved us. Bearing one another and forgivi
another, if any man have a quarrel againſt any
as Chriſt forgave you, ſo alſo do ye. If an
have not the ſpirit of Chriſt, he is none
To be conformed to the image of the ſon o
we muſt live not to ourſelves, but to him.
muſt be pure even as he is pure. He tha
he abideth in him, ought himſelf alſo to wal
as he walked. Becauſe he laid down his
us; we ought to to lay down our lives
brethren." Thus runs the language of Chr
his apoſtles. Could they have expreſſed ther
more plainly and pointedly on this matte
they do? Can we therefore doubt for o
ment, that ſuch is the purpoſe and the will o
and conſequently that it is our duty, to foll
example of our redeemer, and to be conſtan
proaching nearer to an aſſimilation with him

The extraordinary excellence of this example is another conſideration, inviting us to the imitation of it. It is a pattern entirely blameleſs and complete, free from all imperfection and defect, beautifully conſiſtent and harmonious in all its parts, which we may ſafely follow without fear of danger, by which we may guide ourſelves without heſitation in all the events of life. While we tread in the footſteps of Chriſt, we cannot poſſibly err; and ſo ſurely as we are perſuaded that God was ſatisfied with his conduct, ſo certainly may be aſſured that he likewiſe will be graciouſly pleaſed with ours, if we form it upon that model. — It is alſo the nobleſt and the grandeſt example that was ever propoſed to the world. Nothing can more dignify our nature; nothing can procure us more real greatneſs of mind; nothing can more approximate us to the deity, and make us more capable of communion with him, than the being actuated by that mind which we admire in our ſaviour. — It is a univerſal and moſt inſtructive example, adapted to all times and places, to all ranks and orders of men, which may conſtantly guide and improve us, be we high or low, rich or poor, proſperous or unſucceſsful. While our lord was amongſt us, he was in ſuch a variety of circumſtances; he ſtood in ſuch a diverſity of relations; his whole life, during the time of his miniſtry, was ſo buſy and active, that we may learn from him how we ought to behave towards God and man, what we have to do both in

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regard to the preſent and the future, in all the viciſſitudes and events of life. — It is in ſhort an example of the greateſt, the moſt neceſſary, the moſt uſeful and moſt beneficent virtues; an example of ſuch virtues as partly to appear inconvenient to us, as to be totally diſregarded by the generality of men, and yet are indiſpenſably neceſſary to our happineſs, and to the practice of which we are every day, on one account or other, repeatedly called. But can we think this example ſo excellent as it actually is, and yet doubt of our obligation to copy it? Would not this argue great inconſiſtency? Should we not thus deny by our conduct what we confeſs with our lips? Should we not betray a faithleſs diſpoſition, ſhew ourſelves as enemies and traitors to virtue, in refuſing to conform to a rule which we ourſelves confeſs to be faultleſs, a model which we are obliged to admire and revere?

The relations in which we ſtand to Chriſt, and the benefits we have received of him, are a third reaſon forcibly impelling us to the imitation of him. Even the example of a mean and obſcure perſon, of a ſtranger to us, one with whom we have no intimate connection or affinity, who has not the ſmalleſt power over us, to whom we owe neither obedience nor gratitude, even the example of ſuch an one, if it were good and virtuous, ſhould incite us to imitation. How much more then ought it to do ſo in a caſe directly the reverſe of all this? The pattern of virtue and piety which our religion holds out,

out, is the example of a perſon inveſted with the higheſt prerogatives, with the greateſt authority, who merits our utmoſt eſteem and affection, with whom we are connected by the moſt indiſſoluble bands, to whom we owe the moſt willing and the moſt cheerful obedience. It is the example of our lord and maſter, our chieftain and ſaviour, the founder of our religion, the author and finiſher of our faith, the judge of the living and the dead, under whoſe ſovereignty we ſtand, whoſe ſubjects we are, on whoſe ſentence our everlaſting lot depends. It is the example of our beſt friend, our magnanimous and faithful redeemer, who condeſcended for us to the deepeſt humiliation, who laid down his life for us, who did and ſuffered for us while we were his enemies, far more than any friend ever did and ſuffered for another. It is the example of our greateſt benefactor, without whoſe aid we ſhould have been totally ignorant, vicious, comfortleſs and wretched; to whom we are beholden for all the light, all the comfort, and all the happineſs we enjoy, and which we have in future to expect. Every virtue we ſhould learn of him, he has himſelf exemplified in the moſt glorious manner. He that commands us to do good to others, has himſelf done us infinitely more good, than we could have ever hoped for. He who requires that we ſhould love our enemies, and forgive them their failings, loved his enemies, ſhed his own blood for the remiſſion of our ſins. How much are we bound by all this to the imitation of him! How

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inſenſible, how ungrateful, how deſpicable muſt we be ſhould we refuſe it! Certainly we ſhould render ourſelves utterly unworthy of being called the diſciples of Jeſus; we ſhould forfeit all the advantages and felicities that are promiſed us under that diſtinction.

We have fourthly the ſame reaſons for leading a righteous, a holy, a godly, an humble, a heavenly-minded life, as Chriſt had ſo to do; and conſequently we are, for this reaſon, bound to follow his example. Or, do we not ſtand in the ſame relations to the ſupreme being in which Chriſt himſelf ſtood, conſidered as a man? Have we not the very ſame nature as he had? Ought not the honour and glory of God to be the ultimate end of our whole behaviour, and his will the only and unalterable rule of it? Are we not juſt as much ſtrangers and ſojourners here on earth, as our lord and ſaviour was? What greater reaſons have we to love the world and the things of it more, and more highly to prize them, than he had? Are riches, honours, and ſenſual gratifications more our peculiar and higheſt good than they were his? Can they contribute more to our true and everlaſting felicity, than they could contribute to his? Are they leſs dangerous to us than they were to him? Is it an eaſier matter for us to conquer our corruption, to perfect our holineſs, to work out our ſalvation, than it was for him to do the work the father had given him to do? Have we leſs need of devotion, of

zeal and application, of ſelf-denial, and of vigilance to that purpoſe than our ſaviour had for the accompliſhment of his? Can the humility, the gentleneſs, the patience, which ſat ſo gracefully on Chriſt, the ſon of God, and redounded ſo much to his glory, be unbecoming or diſgraceful to us, miſerable ſinners? Can what rendered his character ſo beautiful, ſo venerable, degrade ours, or militate with our condition? Is it leſs ſalutary and needful to us than to him, to be made perfect through trials and ſufferings? Are we too great to deſire to render ourſelves acceptable to the Moſt High, and to be happy by the ſame methods that Chriſt obtained the approbation of his heavenly father, and entered into his glory? But, ſince we cannot aſſert this, as every man muſt allow, without the greateſt abſurdity, then neither can we deny that we are under the ſtrongeſt obligations to make the righteous, holy, godly, humble and heavenly-minded life of Jeſus the pattern and rule of our own.

Our future appointment obliges us laſtly in like manner, to imitate the example of Chriſt, and to let that mind be in us which was alſo in him. We are formed for immortality. We are to quit this world, after a ſhort and uncertain abode in it, and then to paſs into a better and more perfect ſtate. As chriſtians we have the lofty hope, that after death we ſhall go to Chriſt, our chieftain and ſaviour, that we ſhall be with him for ever, that we ſhall be cloſely united with him, and be partakers in the glory he poſſeſſes

poſſeſſes at the right hand of God. We are, as the ſcripture tells us, heirs of God and joint-heirs with Chriſt. We are to live and reign with him. As we here have borne the image of the earthly Adam, ſo ſhall we hereafter bear the image of the heavenly. But how can we hereafter bear his likeneſs, if we have not here done our utmoſt to reſemble him? How can we have fellowſhip with him, and enjoy his bleſſed ſociety, if our mind and deſires be in oppoſition to his? How can we ſhare in his authority, if we have not ſought it in the way of obedience and fidelity, of piety and virtue, by which he obtained it, as our forerunner and guide? Can we be capable of the holy, the divine life he leads in heaven, unleſs we ſtudy purity and holineſs here on earth? Or, can we imagine that he will acknowledge us for his, and as ſuch admit us into his heavenly kingdom, if we ſtand in no other connection with him, and have no farther aſſimilation with him, than that we are called by his name, hold his doctrine to be true, and ſhew him an outward reverence? What have we in this caſe to expect, but that dreadful, yet righteous ſentence, "Depart from me, ye workers of wickedneſs; I know you not!"

Ye ſee, pious hearers, how many and cogent reaſons we have for following the example of our redeemer, and for being like-minded with him. And ſo certain is it, that unleſs we do ſo, we neither ſupport the name of chriſtians, nor can be happy.

Theſe are doctrines ſo eſſentially inherent to religion and chriſtianity, that we cannot refuſe our aſſent to them, without at once rejecting all religion and all chriſtianity. And yet how little are theſe important doctrines thought of! How ſlender is the influence they have on our conduct! Do all our words and works teſtify, do all the effects of our capacities teſtify, that we are the diſciples and followers of the holy and righteous, the humble and gentle, the beneficent and divine, the heavenly-minded Jeſus? O chriſtians, how far inferior are we ſtill to the pattern of virtue and piety ſet us by our lord and ſaviour! How little reſemblance there is between his temper and carriage, and ours! How little conformity between our lives and the ſanctity of the doctrine we confeſs, or the conduct of the maſter to whom we belong! How cold and unfruitful the love we bear to Chriſt, our redeemer, and how imperfect and inconſtant the obedience we pay him! May theſe reflections awaken and alarm us! May they fill us with the moſt ſenſible remorſe and trouble at our negligence and ingratitude! May they kindle in us a lively zeal to walk worthier of our vocation, and to diſcharge our duties with more carefulneſs and fidelity! Yes, my chriſtian brethren, here at the table of our lord let us renew theſe ſacred reſolutions with all poſſible ſincerity and devotion. Here, where we ſhall receive the ſymbols and pledges of his magnanimous love, let us ſolemnly vow to our beloved redeemer, no longer

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to live to ourſelves, but to him, and to conform to his likeneſs. Here let us learn the gentleneſs, the philanthropy, the ſelf-denial, the contempt of the world, the obedience to God, the zeal for his honour, the perſeverance in good, of which our ſaviour has ſet us ſo illuſtrious an example by his life and by his death. Here let us offer up to him our bodies and our ſouls, which he purchaſed ſo dearly and are his, by ſolemnly and for ever renouncing all the ſinful luſts, the ſordid maxims and depraved manners of the world, that are at variance with his mind. So ſhall we actually do honour to our redeemer, who has ſo loved us as to lay down his life for us. So ſhall we give him the thankfulneſs that is his due, and which he has ſuch a right to demand. So ſhall we adorn the name of chriſtians; we ſhall make it an object of eſteem and reverence; we ſhall edify others by our behaviour, and ſhine as lights in the midſt of the corrupt generation of this world. But ſo likewiſe ſhall we arrive at the end of our faith, everlaſting felicity. If we, like Chriſt, our leader and head, be dead unto ſin, and alive unto God; if we, like him, overcome the world, and by perſeverance in good works, ſeek after praiſe and honour and immortality; then ſhall we alſo, like him, be exalted to glory. We ſhall, like him, be filled with joy and bliſs at the right hand of God; we ſhall find, in his bleſſed ſociety, and in the cloſeſt intercourſe with him, the completion of all our wiſhes.

Such is the perfection of the chriſtian law, ſuch the purity of thoſe morals which Jeſus delivered, ſuch the beauty of the goſpel as a rule of life, as to have gained the love and admiration of many who have diſbelieved its doctrines. But he gave them a ſtill higher luſtre by his example. The perfection of the chriſtian law, the purity of thoſe morals which Jeſus delivered, the beauty of the goſpel as a rule of life, appear nowhere to ſuch advantage, as in the life of our lord. There you contemplate holineſs, not as a dead letter, but as a living form; ſubſtantial, preſent, ſpeaking to the world. He trod before you the path that leads to heaven. It is pointed out by his precepts; it is marked by his example; it is conſecrated by his blood.

Would you learn what virtue is, would you be in love with virtue, would you practiſe virtue; contemplate the life of Jeſus, ſtudy the life of Jeſus, imitate the life of Jeſus. He to whom the jews preferred a robber and a murderer, was fairer in his life than the ſons of men, and purer in his heart than the angels of God. That head which they crowned with thorns was ever intent on benevolent deeds, and at that very moment of time meditated their good. Thoſe feet which they bound to the croſs went about on errands of mercy. Thoſe hands which they nailed to the accurſed tree, were lifted up in devotion to God, or ſtretched out in beneficence to men. Jeſus, through his whole life, marked out the path which leads to the heavens.

Walk

Walk in that path, chriſtians. You ſhall arrive at heaven; and be of that happy number, who are to inhabit the manſions prepared for you by him who is the reſurrection and the life.

Communion.

SERMON LII.

Of the Paſtoral Office.

GOD, Father of men, what great things haſt thou done in us thy children, and how much art thou daily doing for us! All nature reveals to us thy glory and grandeur, thy grace and parental affection towards us. All informs us of thy will and of our grand appointment. All incites us to the accompliſhment of thy will, and to the continually completer attainment of the ultimate end of our being. Nature as well as religion; the reaſon with which thou haſt endowed us, as well as thy more immediate revelation. Thanks and praiſes be to thee, the All-bountiful, for the various means of inſtruction and knowledge thou haſt imparted to us! Thanks and praiſes be to thee, more eſpecially for the advantages which thou haſt vouchſafed to us in this reſpect as chriſtians! Yes, in thy ſon Jeſus thou haſt cauſed a brighter luminary to riſe upon us. By him we are come nearer to thee, our father, and to the knowledge of the truth. By him we have learnt

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to form juſter conceptions of numberleſs momentous, conſolatory objects. By him we have attained to greater certainty concerning thy will and thy gracious diſpoſitions towards us, more hope and aſſurance both living and dying. By him haſt thou inſtituted amongſt us the paſtoral office; and what means, what inducements, always to proceed farther in knowledge and virtue, haſt thou thus beſtowed upon us! How greatly facilitated to us the way to perfection and happineſs! Oh might this important office be more and more faithfully adminiſtered by all who bear it, and be uniformly diffuſing more light and comfort and joy, continually producing more good diſpoſitions and actions among mankind! Do thou cleanſe and ſanctify thy church, moſt gracious God, that both teachers and hearers may be conſtantly advancing together towards that which thou wouldſt have them to be. Oh pour out thy ſpirit and energy upon us all who are ordained to declare thy will to our brethren, and lead them to thee and to happineſs; teach us rightly to diſcern the truth, to believe it firmly, to follow its dictates faithfully, to deliver it with conviction to others; and thus open to it an acceſs to the underſtandings and to the hearts of them that hear us. Enable our hearers alſo to bring with them increaſing docility and attention to the diſcourſe of their teachers, and to apply it with growing diligence to their improvement. Oh might thus the kingdom of thy ſon Jeſus, the kingdom of truth and virtue,

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of liberty and happineſs, come, be ever farther extending, ever more firmly eſtabliſhed, and be inceſſantly gaining more glorious victories over error and vice and miſery! Bleſs to the furtherance of theſe views, our reflections on the wiſe preparatives thou haſt made to that end; and hear us, through Jeſus Chriſt, our lord, in whoſe name we further call upon thee, ſaying: Our father, &c.

EPHESIANS, iv. 11.

He gave ſome — paſtors and teachers.

THE paſtoral office, which is everywhere introduced into the chriſtian church, and dates its origin from the times of the apoſtles, is certainly an inſtitution of extreme utility; an inſtitution which would inſure to Jeſus and his diſciples one of the foremoſt ranks among the benefactors of the human race, were we only to conſider them as wiſe men, and not as peculiar plenipotentiary ambaſſadors from God to mankind. Nowhere do we find in the ancient world, as far as it is known to us, any ſuch teachers of the people; teachers that inſtructed their brethren, without diſtinction of ranks, of ages, of ſexes, or manners, in their relations to God and man, in their duties, and the objects that concern their preſent and their future ſtate; who inſtructed them

them at ſtated times, not far aſunder, on theſe moſt important ſubjects; who led them to conſideration and virtue, comforted them in their ſorrows, and in ſuch various ways promoted their contentment and happineſs. — But we everywhere find idolatrous prieſts and domineering leaders of the people, throughout the ancient and modern, the heatheniſh or not-chriſtian world; men who could make the ignorance and weakneſſes of their fellow-creatures ſubſervient to the eſtabliſhment of a tyrannical and cruel authority, which they employed in extorting rich preſents and hard tributes, or the attainment of other ſelfiſh views, who ſpread fear and terrors around them, and by all the ſolemnities of their religion and worſhip promoted neither wiſdom nor virtue, but were favourable to ſuperſtition and vice. — I am well aware, my pious hearers, that even the chriſtian paſtorate has been very often and very ſhamefully miſuſed, and is ſtill miſuſed; that it is not and does not always and entirely produce what it might be and in its native tendencies ſhould produce: and this is not at all ſurpriſing, ſince it is ſupplied by men, who are ſubject like all others to failings and errors, and are ſo liable to be deceived by the paſſions. At the ſame time it has certainly done an infinite deal of good; ſtill, upon the whole, does much good; and will — as we may aſſuredly hope — in due courſe of time effect ſtill far more good. The chriſtian teacher undoubtedly therefore merits reſpect, on account of the office he bears,

and

and the uſefulneſs he thereby obtains. But, for rendering this a rational reſpect, and giving it a ſalutary influence on our conduct; to prevent it from degenerating into ſuperſtition, or gradually giving place to diſreſpect and contempt: it ſhould be grounded on right notions of it, and on what chriſtian teachers are and ought to be. We ſhould not require and expect more from them, than we can with juſtice require and expect. And to ſettle theſe notions, and to render them more common, is the deſign of my preſent diſcourſe. It is ſaid in our text, that Chriſt appointed or ordained ſome in his church to be paſtors and teachers. Theſe are the very perſons whom we at preſent commonly call preachers; and the purport of whoſe inſtitution we will now ſtudy more clearly to underſtand. In this view, we will inveſtigate the relations wherein a preacher ſtands to his flock; or, ſhew you what the preacher properly is and ought to be in regard to his congregation. In order to this, it will be neceſſary to obviate firſt the erroneous conceptions that are formed of theſe relations, and afterwards we will proceed to illuſtrate the true nature of them.

In the firſt place, the preacher is no prieſt in the ſtrict and uſual acceptation of the word, but only in that ſenſe wherein it is uſed by the compilers of our liturgy. He is not a perſon that ſtands in any nearer relation to God, or has any more intimate and familiar intercourſe with him, than the reſt of his worſhipers; he is not a perſon, who, when we have ſinned,

ſinned, can free us from the condign puniſ
and reconcile us again with our offended n
of the ſin, by offerings, by rites, by interce
He may and ought to announce to us favou
life on the part of God, ſet the value of his
ties and bleſſings both in nature and religion i
proper light, and excite us to be glad and
therein; but he cannot diſpenſe either the one
other according to his pleaſure. He ma
ought to promiſe us the pardon of our ſins, and
laſting happineſs, on certain conditions, in the
of God; but he cannot actually confer them.
may and ought to explain and inculcate the
commandments: but he cannot diſcharge an
the obſervance of them. Of his own author
can neither impoſe nor invalidate any vow
obligation, any duty. He is therefore no
manager between God and man, as that he ca
a greater value to our acts of worſhip than
would otherwiſe have; or impart, by certain
fied words, to the water in baptiſm, and
ſigns of the body and blood of Jeſus in the
ſupper, any power or efficacy which they had
fore; or laſtly whoſe prayers are more accept
heaven and prevalent with God, than the
of any other ſincere and upright chriſtian. —
Chriſt is repreſented to us in the writings
apoſtles, and particularly in the writings
apoſtle Paul, as the ſole high-prieſt and m
between God and man, for tranquillizing ma

and more eſpecially the jews, on the recent abolition of the prieſtly office and the ſacrifices in uſe, by the introduction of chriſtianity, for inſpiring them with a filial confidence in God, and for aſſuring them, in a ſenſible manner, adapted to their comprehenſions, of his protection and favour. All notions of peculiar prieſts and ſacrifices, that have been adopted in the chriſtian religion and the chriſtian worſhip, are ſuperſtitious; they are in direct oppoſition to the ſcope and the ſpirit of that holy religion, and of that pure and rational worſhip; they miſlead us from the God to whom Jeſus has opened us a free acceſs, and whom he has taught us to regard and to love as our father; they are relics of the feeble jewiſh way of thinking, which the chriſtian doctrine was intended by degrees to aboliſh, and of which, among chriſtians, who are no longer children, but ſhould be men in knowledge and in faith, no traces ought now to remain.

The preacher is ſecondly no curate of ſouls in the ſtricteſt meaning of the expreſſion, and as it implies a perſon on whoſe pains and behaviour the ſalvation or the happineſs of the reſt, if not altogether, yet greatly depends; who can and ſhould contribute as much or ſtill more than themſelves to their moral improvement, to their ſpiritual and eternal welfare; and whoſe future lot is indiſſolubly connected with the lot of the ſouls entruſted to his care. No, every individual muſt be the curate of his own ſoul, bear his own guilt, and render an account to God for himſelf.

himſelf. Every perſon muſt fulfil his duty according to the utmoſt of his power; but none can be ſecurity for the conſequences, much leſs fulfil it for another. And what ſenſible man would take the paſtoral office upon him, if he ſhould thereby oblige himſelf to anſwer for the conduct of all ſuch as belong to his congregation, or to concern himſelf for the happineſs of each of them in particular, as a father concerns himſelf for his children, or a domeſtic tutor for his pupil? If this were to be the caſe, he ought to be thoroughly and intimately acquainted with every perſon in his pariſh; they ſhould at all times and in all circumſtances exhibit themſelves to him as they really are; they ſhould make him the confident of their moſt ſecret diſpoſitions and deſigns; he ſhould be the witneſs of their conduct in domeſtic as well as in civil ſociety; he ſhould have the right and the licence to give them the moſt determinate precepts on all their concernments: and even if all this were done, which yet is not, and will not, and cannot be done, ſtill it muſt be an effect of the moſt audacious temerity for a man to aſſume to himſelf the peculiar and ſole guidance of ſo many perſons of ſuch various capacities and tempers, and to ſtand as ſurety for them in the day of judgment.

No, my pious hearers, when you call us, preachers, your curates, you cannot reaſonably exact anything more of us, than that, according to our beſt inſights and to your neceſſities, we ſhould ſhew you what you ought to do, and how you are to ſet about it,

it, for delivering your ſoul from the captivity of error, of ſenſuality, of vice, or to caution you againſt them; for adorning it with wiſdom and virtue; for rendering it both in this and in the future world as perfect, as happy, and as agreeable to God, as it is capable of becoming. In this deſign, with no leſs earneſtneſs than affection, we are to inſtruct, to exhort, to admoniſh, to reprove, to intreat; to call your attention to whatever may be in an eminent degree uſeful or prejudicial to you at all times, and on every alteration of your condition; and all this for ſincerely promoting the cauſe of truth, of virtue, and your happineſs; and never to be weary and diſheartened in ſo doing, though attended by the worſt conſequences. Thus are we to care for your ſouls, as we muſt give an account how we have inſtructed you, and of the uſe we have made of the times, the circumſtances, the occaſions afforded us for that purpoſe.

We may even in a ſtricter ſenſe be conſidered as your curates, if you afford us opportunity and encouragement to make what we here deliver and teach in public more profitable to you by friendly and private converſation, apply it more cloſely to your ſituation and your preſent exigencies, remind you of your particular duties, failings, tranſgreſſions; to labour with you in maintaining or reſtoring domeſtic harmony, or to ſupply you with more determinate precepts and means for your proficiency in knowledge and virtue. At the ſame time, as every-

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one readily perceives, the preacher cannot execute this duty of fraternal admonition and particular exhortation to goodneſs, without the concurrence, or againſt the will, of his pariſhioner. Neither is this a duty peculiarly incumbent on him: he poſſeſſes it in common with every other chriſtian; only in ſo much as in particular caſes and with certain perſons, from the greater reſpect they have for him, and the greater ſagacity they may allow him to poſſeſs, he may fulfil it with better ſucceſs than another.

The miſtaken and ſuperſtitious idea annexed to the office of a clergyman is in nothing ſo apparent as in regard to the ſick and dying. But too frequently almoſt the whole hope of the ſalvation of a man is built on the preſence, on the diſcourſe, on the prayer of the curate. How ſadly are the aſſiſtants concerned, leſt the ſick perſon ſhould expire without this preparation or ſuccour! What can we conclude from hence, but that they attribute to the clergyman far greater ability and influence than he actually has? We are by no means averſe from attending when called to the ſick and the dying; and when we can excite or cheriſh any good, any chriſtian reflections and ſentiments in them, when we are able to adminiſter anything to their comfort, or for ſmoothing their paſſage from this into the future world, we do it with all our heart. But it is abſolutely impoſſible for us, or any other man, at ſuch a time, to make a good man of a bad one,

or as it were to open the gates of heaven to a ſinner who has been the ſlave of ſenſe and the ſport of paſſion his whole life long, and to be ſecurity for him againſt the penalties he has to dread. And then the viſitation of the ſick is a duty not obligatory on us alone, but we have it in common with all other chriſtians. It is their duty mutually to ſupport, to comfort, to exhort and encourage each other in their afflictions and troubles, and to make ſupplications for all men. In the primitive church, in the times of the apoſtles and their immediate ſucceſſors, when it was better ſeen, or more believed, that the portion of a man after death depended not on the manner how he ſpent the laſt days or the laſt hours of his life, but was to be determined by his predominant diſpoſitions and the whole of his foregoing behaviour; it was not then peculiar to the office of the teacher to viſit the ſick and the dying, but it was the duty of the elders and the wardens of the flock; and in regard to the other ſex, it was the duty of the matrons or widows to perform that office. Theſe took charge of the ſick and the dying with cordial affection as brothers and ſiſters, conſoled them, prayed with them, provided, if they were poor, for their ſupport and nouriſhment, tended them, and did them numberleſs perſonal ſervices. And theſe are undoubtedly the beſt offices that can be afforded a perſon at ſuch times, and which every one ſhould perform according to his means.

A preacher

A preacher is thirdly not a man of a different kind or ſpecies from other men. He is no divine, ſo far as this term is uſed to imply either a man completely perfect, or one elevated above all ſenſible and terreſtrial things. This miſtaken notion proceeds from the abuſe of the term; or, to ſpeak more properly, the epithet itſelf was miſapplied for the purpoſe of procuring in the earlier times to the teachers of religion a ſuperiority over other men, and of placing them in a higher reſpect. It was then, and it is at preſent, not unfrequently underſtood to imply a man that is abſolutely indifferent to everything ſenſible, to all viſible objects, to whatever cheers or ſaddens others; who deſpiſes all ſuch matters; whom neither honour nor diſgrace, neither riches nor poverty, neither pain nor pleaſure can at all affect; who is conſtantly employed in religious contemplation and peculiar exerciſes of devotion; whoſe thoughts are unremittedly directed to the moſt important and moſt exalted objects; in whoſe ſight mirth and jocularity, wit and good humour are horrible tranſgreſſions; whoſe preſence is baneful to all pleaſure, and whoſe looks diffuſe a ſullen gravity on all around. No, my pious hearers, ſuch men are we not, nor ſuch ought we to be; and if we either could or ſhould be ſuch, we ſhould be either deſerving of contempt or compaſſion, and in any caſe be prejudicial to ſociety. No, we are entirely like you in whatever conſtitutes a man in reſpect to his weak, as well as in reſpect to

his better ſide; and when any of us excell you in wiſdom and virtue, it is from no prerogative of our ſtation, but a perſonal advantage which any one of you may have over us.

It is true, our ſtation and office afford, or ſeem to afford, us ſome reſources for improving in wiſdom and virtue which you have not. We employ ourſelves frequently, and much oftener and more continuedly than you, in reflections on God and his will, on the deſtination and duties of man. But how vigilant muſt we be over ourſelves, how much attention muſt we neceſſarily exert, in order to prevent theſe circumſtances, ſo advantageous in themſelves, from becoming detrimental to us! For the very reaſon that we are obliged to employ ourſelves ſo often, and ſo often ſolely in regard to others, in the doctrines of religion, and that even at times when we have no particular motive and are not diſpoſed to do ſo, for this very reaſon they may loſe much of their force in reſpect of us. Theſe thoughts, by their frequent recurrence, may become ſo habitual to us, as to make us think that we underſtand and feel the ſubjects themſelves, though all the while we are only thinking of barren words. Hence it happens, that difficulties and doubts are frequently augmenting in proportion as we advance farther in knowledge; and that, on the other hand, the pleaſure attendant on meditation and devotion may loſe much of its poignancy by the abundance of enjoyment. What a comfort muſt it

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be to the chriſtian merchant, or artificer, or any other who is not a clergyman, when on having conſcientiouſly performed the buſineſs of the day, in the evening he recollects his ſcattered thoughts, and can converſe for a ſhorter or a longer time, with God, and reflect upon his moſt ſerious concerns! Certainly, the pleaſure this occupation procures him, muſt frequently be far more lively than ours, juſt as a repaſt is much better reliſhed by a man who has faſted long, than by one who has been almoſt all the day ſitting at a plentiful table. — Beſides we preachers commonly have not ſo many opportunities and means for exerciſing ourſelves in wiſdom and virtue, and for applying their precepts to the various occurrences of common life, as he who ſtands in more diverſified connections with other men, who has ſuch various affairs to mind, ſuch various duties to fulfil, and ſo many dealings to tranſact with perſons of ſuch different opinions and manners; and likewiſe in this reſpect may a well-informed, honeſt chriſtian, who is no clergyman, eaſily excel us in wiſdom and virtue.

As to the reſt, my pious hearers, we have no other duties, and obligations, that are not alſo incumbent on you. What is true and right and expedient, that ſame is true and right and expedient, for you and for us and for all mankind. Whatever is falſe, wrong, wicked, is equally ſo both to

you and to us. What is lawful for you to do, is lawful for us. What God forbids us in his word or by the light of reaſon, he forbids the ſame to you. We have all the ſame law. We muſt all walk the very ſame way to praiſe, to honour, to immortality. If we muſt give an account how we have diſcharged our clerical office, ſo muſt you likewiſe render account how you have fulfilled your civil offices, how you have purſued your calling as a merchant, as a manufacturer, as a mechanic, how you have maintained your poſt as a maſter, as a guardian, as a ſervant, and the like; and of you, and of us, in all theſe reſpects fidelity and integrity will be required.

We ought indeed to abſtain from many things which you may do, or at leaſt which you do. But, either theſe things are intrinſically bad, or they are not. Are they intrinſically bad; then have you as little right and leave to do or to uſe them, as we; and they are not to be excuſed by any diſtinction between clergyman and laic. Poiſon will ever remain poiſon, let who will find pleaſure in taking it. But are theſe things not bad, and we yet refrain from them; we then do ſo out of reſpect to certain prevailing prejudices, which cannot perhaps be directly oppoſed or deſpiſed without harm; we do it, that we may not give offence to the weak; we do it, that, by our total abſtinence in theſe reſpects, we may probably prevent ſtill greater abuſes, and at leaſt

leaſt evince, by our example, that a man may abridge himſelf of them, and yet be contented and happy.

In fine, we ſhould by all means ſet a good example to others; and if we really wiſh our doctrines to be believed and our precepts followed, we ſhall certainly be extremely careful to teſtify to all men by the whole tenour of our behaviour, that we believe theſe doctrines ourſelves, and acknowledge theſe precepts to be right and good. For the reſt, we have theſe duties to obſerve in common with all you. No man is to give offence or ſcandal to another. Every one ſhould let the light of his virtue ſhine before men. We ſhould all mutually excite one another to good works. Our example can however never be ſo extenſive and inſtructive as yours. Our manner of life is too uniform. Our connections and avocations are not ſufficiently diverſified. Beſides, the opinion that we do many things ſolely on account of our office, which otherwiſe we ſhould not do, often deprives our beſt examples of all their efficacy. How frequently is it ſaid, when we do anything tolerably good, "Yes, this he does becauſe he is a clergyman; if ſuch perſons did not act ſo, who ſhould? We are no more than common chriſtians, who cannot be expected to carry our chriſtian perfection to ſuch a length; nothing of this ſort is to be expected of us!" How often is it ſaid: "Yes, he muſt needs do ſo, or abſtain from this, if he will do honour to his profeſſion,

feſſion, if he would act conſiſtently. Were it not for this conſideration, were he not reſtrained by fear, were he in our place, he would behave in a very different manner!" Thus do prejudice and partiality but too often enervate the influence of our example. With you, my pious hearers, this is not the caſe. Your good example operates more unimpeded and complete. When the merchant gives proofs of great probity and conſcientiouſneſs; when the opulent and the noble are modeſt and humane, ſhewing by their conduct how little their outward advantages avail in their eyes, and how little he that is poor and lowly ought therefore to be ſcorned; when the man of the world, or the layman, as he is called, teſtifies a reverence for God and religion, and mankind can diſcern his unfeigned piety; when any one, who, in reſpect of his fortune, might indulge in luxury and magnificence, and revel in all kinds of amuſements, yet lives in a becoming and orderly manner, and moderates himſelf in the enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſures; when perſons adorned with the charms of youth and beauty ſeek to diſtinguiſh themſelves, not by childiſh oſtentation and vanity, but by wiſdom and virtue, diſplaying indeed an open countenance and a cheerful diſpoſition, but not a thoughtleſs and frivolous behaviour; in ſhort, when they are ſeen to renounce their own holds and intereſts and truſts in all that man is moſt apt to depend upon, that they may the more expedite-

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Having hitherto been encountering prejudices no leſs hurtful than common, my pious hearers, we ſhall now find it ſo much the eaſier to illuſtrate the ſubject before us agreeably to its true nature and extent. If therefore this be not the relation in which the preacher ſtands towards his congregation, what then ought it to be, and what actually is it?

Firſt he ſhould be the teacher of the people or of the congregation. Certainly a very honourable, but at the ſame time a very arduous employment! How momentous the ſubjects he has to inculcate; and how much depends on the method in which he inculcates them! He ſhould be a teacher of religion, and of generally uſeful wiſdom. As a teacher of religion, it is his duty to inſtruct his hearers in the relations wherein they ſtand to God, their creator and preſerver, their father and benefactor, their lawgiver and judge, and to Jeſus Chriſt, his ſon and ambaſſador, their deliverer and lord. It is his duty to furniſh them with adequate and worthy conceptions of the majeſty and perfections of God, of his condeſcenſion and love to mankind, of the ſanctity and equity of his laws, of the wiſdom and goodneſs of his providence, and of the benefits he has vouchſafed them by Jeſus and his work on earth. He is to tell them how God is diſpoſed towards them;

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No, my pious hearers, as often as I preach ſuch truths as tend to promote human perfection and happineſs; the truths that have a practical influence on the moral behaviour, and on the repoſe and ſatisfaction of mankind: ſo often do I preach Chriſt and him crucified; ſo often do I contribute to carry on his work on earth; ſo often do I proportionately ſupply his place among my brethren. For he came, he lived, he taught, he ſuffered and died, he aroſe again from the dead, and is now the head and the lord of his church, for diſſeminating truth and virtue and happineſs among the human race; and whatever advances them is his work, is conſiſtent with his aims, enlarges and confirms his kingdom; even though it be not immediately connected with his hiſtory, nor expreſsly contained in ſuch of his diſcourſes as are come down to us. Though truth

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or as it were to open the gates of heaven to a ſinner who has been the ſlave of ſenſe and the ſport of paſſion his whole life long, and to be ſecurity for him againſt the penalties he has to dread. And then the viſitation of the ſick is a duty not obligatory on us alone, but we have it in common with all other chriſtians. It is their duty mutually to ſupport, to comfort, to exhort and encourage each other in their afflictions and troubles, and to make ſupplications for all men. In the primitive church, in the times of the apoſtles and their immediate ſucceſſors, when it was better ſeen, or more believed, that the portion of a man after death depended not on the manner how he ſpent the laſt days or the laſt hours of his life, but was to be determined by his predominant diſpoſitions and the whole of his foregoing behaviour; it was not then peculiar to the office of the teacher to viſit the ſick and the dying, but it was the duty of the elders and the wardens of the flock; and in regard to the other ſex, it was the duty of the matrons or widows to perform that office. Theſe took charge of the ſick and the dying with cordial affection as brothers and ſiſters, conſoled them, prayed with them, provided, if they were poor, for their ſupport and nouriſhment, tended them, and did them numberleſs perſonal ſervices. And theſe are undoubtedly the beſt offices that can be afforded a perſon at ſuch times, and which every one ſhould perform according to his means.

A preacher

A preacher is thirdly not a man of a different kind or ſpecies from other men. He is no divine, ſo far as this term is uſed to imply either a man completely perfect, or one elevated above all ſenſible and terreſtrial things. This miſtaken notion proceeds from the abuſe of the term; or, to ſpeak more properly, the epithet itſelf was miſapplied for the purpoſe of procuring in the earlier times to the teachers of religion a ſuperiority over other men, and of placing them in a higher reſpect. It was then, and it is at preſent, not unfrequently underſtood to imply a man that is abſolutely indifferent to everything ſenſible, to all viſible objects, to whatever cheers or ſaddens others; who deſpiſes all ſuch matters; whom neither honour nor diſgrace, neither riches nor poverty, neither pain nor pleaſure can at all affect; who is conſtantly employed in religious contemplation and peculiar exerciſes of devotion; whoſe thoughts are unremittedly directed to the moſt important and moſt exalted objects; in whoſe ſight mirth and jocularity, wit and good humour are horrible tranſgreſſions; whoſe preſence is baneful to all pleaſure, and whoſe looks diffuſe a ſullen gravity on all around. No, my pious hearers, ſuch men are we not, nor ſuch ought we to be; and if we either could or ſhould be ſuch, we ſhould be either deſerving of contempt or compaſſion, and in any caſe be prejudicial to ſociety. No, we are entirely like you in whatever conſtitutes a man in reſpect to his weak, as well as in reſpect to

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be to the chriſtian merchant, or artificer, or any other who is not a clergyman, when on having conſcientiouſly performed the buſineſs of the day, in the evening he recollects his ſcattered thoughts, and can converſe for a ſhorter or a longer time, with God, and reflect upon his moſt ſerious concerns! Certainly, the pleaſure this occupation procures him, muſt frequently be far more lively than ours, juſt as a repaſt is much better reliſhed by a man who has faſted long, than by one who has been almoſt all the day ſitting at a plentiful table. — Beſides we preachers commonly have not ſo many opportunities and means for exerciſing ourſelves in wiſdom and virtue, and for applying their precepts to the various occurrences of common life, as he who ſtands in more diverſified connections with other men, who has ſuch various affairs to mind, ſuch various duties to fulfil, and ſo many dealings to tranſact with perſons of ſuch different opinions and manners; and likewiſe in this reſpect may a well-informed, honeſt chriſtian, who is no clergyman, eaſily excel us in wiſdom and virtue.

As to the reſt, my pious hearers, we have no other duties, and obligations, that are not alſo incumbent on you. What is true and right and expedient, that ſame is true and right and expedient, for you and for us and for all mankind. Whatever is falſe, wrong, wicked, is equally ſo both to

flock; and ſo might he likewiſe, in a ſtricter ſenſe, be ſaid to watch over their ſouls, and labour more effectually at their improvement and felicity.

And this, my pious hearers, is the relative ſituation wherein the preacher ſtands to his congregation: he is their teacher, their leader, their friend and adviſer. Allow me to conclude this diſcourſe with drawing a few inferences from what has been ſaid, and reminding you of the duties which in this reſpect you are bound to obſerve.

You plainly perceive from all that has been advanced, my pious hearers, that we, preachers, require of you no blind faith, no ſervile obedience, no unlimited compliance. We feel our infirmities and frailties much too ſenſibly to pretend to this; and the more we are actuated by the ſpirit of chriſtianity, the more zealouſly ſhall we in theſe reſpects maintain the cauſe of freedom. No, try all things that we deliver to you as truths, and enjoin you as duties: compare them with what reaſon and ſcripture inform you concerning God and his will; prove all things, and adhere to that which is good. The more carefully you examine our doctrines, the more you reflect upon them; the more you diſcourſe with each other about them, in honeſt intentions: the greater are our hopes that you will reap benefit from them. Only by ſuch reflections, only by ſuch examinations and diſcuſſions, can what we tell and teach you aſſimilate itſelf with your own ſyſtem of reflection, and either rectify or enlarge it.

You

You ſee farther, my pious hearers, that we require no exceſſive and ſuperſtitious reverence from you. The office we bear is undoubtedly honourable, and they that bear it ſhould be held in a certain degree of eſtimation, if their bearing of it is to be attended with ſucceſs. When therefore you are candid towards us; when you conceal as much as poſſible our failings and imperfections, from the conſideration, leſt the reſpect to our office ſhould thereby be leſſened, and the uſeful effects of it be hindered; you then act wiſely, and conſiſtently with your duty. For the reſt, judge of us with the ſame equity and charity, you are accuſtomed to uſe in judging of your neighbours in general; and let us experience the ſame juſtice and lenity that is due to all mankind.

You ſee thirdly, my pious hearers, in what relation we properly ſtand to you. Require therefore no more from us than you may conſiſtently and reaſonably expect. Require neither ſupernatural gifts and powers, nor a perfection that is above the reach of humanity. Aſcribe no greater importance to our words and actions, no greater efficacy than they really poſſeſs. Rely not upon us in matters, where no man ſhould or can rely upon another; where every man muſt provide for himſelf and his own concerns. Think not that we either can or ought to do the generality or the principal of the things that relate to the ſalvation of your ſouls and your everlaſting happineſs. No, it is our part to

ſhew you what in this reſpect you have to do, and it is your parts actually to do it; and the latter is inconteſtably far more important and difficult than the former. Seek not therefore to throw any reſponſibility upon us, which will be required not of us, but of you; and conſtantly keep in mind the declaration of the apoſtle: "Every man ſhall bear his own burden; every one of us ſhall give an account of himſelf to God."

Laſtly you ſee, my pious hearers, how weighty and arduous our miniſtration is. Alleviate then to us, as much as you can, the concerns and duties of it. Alleviate them to us by the attention you afford to our diſcourſes; by the zeal and devotion with which you frequent the ſeveral offices of public worſhip; by the ſtrict vigilance you keep over your children whom we inſtruct; by the encouragements you hold out to them; by the converſations you hold with them on what they are learning, and what they have already been taught; by the application you make of it to the cultivation of their heart, and the forming of their character. In a more eſpecial manner, alleviate to us the burden of our office and reward us for our pains, by the faithful uſe you make of our doctrine; by the willing obedience you pay to our well-founded admonitions and exhortations; by the good deeds which you perform; by the ſhining virtues by which you diſtinguiſh yourſelves beyond others; by your continual improvement in wiſdom and piety. This will prove to us

that our labours in your behalf have not been in vain; and this assurance will render all the efforts and toils we exert and undergo, easy and pleasant. It will never allow us to become faint or weary; and even in the hour of death and at the day of judgment it will be our consolation and joy.

FORMS OF PRAYER

FOR

PARTICULAR PERSONS,

AND FOR

A FAMILY.

By the truly venerable and evangelical paſtor of Chriſt's flock,

BISHOP HOADLEY.

Let every man ſtudy his prayers; and read his duty in his petitions. Bp. Taylor's Holy Living, p. 234.

PREFACE.

THE great deſign of the duty of prayer is to expreſs, under an actual ſenſe of the preſence of God, thoſe good ſentiments and pious diſpoſitions, which it is proper for us to entertain and cultivate within us, conſidered as dependent, reaſonable and ſocial creatures: and particularly as creatures made capable of knowing one ſupreme maker and governour of all things, and plainly accountable to him for our whole conduct. The ſentiments I mean are ſuch as ariſe from our dependence upon God; from our obligations and duty to him; and from our relation to one another, as partakers of human nature and members of human ſociety. And then only it is, that we fully anſwer the deſign of this duty when we perform it in ſuch a mannr, as that it may have a good effect upon ourſelves, by keeping up the juſteſt ſenſe in our minds of all ſuch important conſiderations as are the true grounds of our faith and hope in God; and the ſtrongeſt motives to our own conſtant practice of all that is good and praiſeworthy.

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Laſtly, my pious hearers, the preacher is alſo to be the friend and the counſellor of his flock. If the chriſtian preacher were or could be more ſo, he certainly might do more good in his ſtation. But he can only be ſo as far as his congregation will allow him. No man can obtrude himſelf upon any as their friend or their counſellor; and if a perſon ſhould attempt it, he would by that very means fail of the purpoſe he had in view. At the ſame time, the teacher ſhould be always ready to embrace ſuch opportunities as naturally offer, and uſe them with fidelity. It need hardly be mentioned, that he is not to interfere in extraneous matters, or miſapply the reſpect which accrues to him either from his of-

fice or his perſonal qualities, to the proſecution of ſelfiſh views, or the gratification of diſorderly paſſions. As a teacher, he is only to meddle with moral and religious objects, and with the application of them to particular events and occurrences of life. Since he may reaſonably be preſumed to have reflected on theſe matters more, and to be more intimately acquainted with them, than the generality of his hearers; and, as in his public diſcourſes pronounced to a very mixt aſſembly, he cannot ſay everything it were profitable and neceſſary for any one in particular to know; it would certainly be of great utility, if opportunities were afforded him to ſupply this unavoidable defect of inſtruction by private converſation. By this channel might he convey direction and aſſiſtance to ſuch as ſhould be deſirous of making farther progreſs in the knowledge of religion: thus might he deliver the candid and ingenuous doubter from his doubts, or tranquillize him in them: thus might he remove many a prejudice from the anxious and perturbed mind, and bring the ſorrowful heart to a comfortable and joyful reliance on the goſpel: thus might he be enabled to ſpeak courage to the ſincere but feeble chriſtian, and probably facilitate to him the conqueſt of himſelf and the world: thus might he inform any individual how he ſhould apply to himſelf and his particular circumſtances the general precepts and encouragements of religion. So would the teacher be at the ſame time the leader and the counſellor of his

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feſſion, if he would act conſiſtently. Were it not for this conſideration, were he not reſtrained by fear, were he in our place, he would behave in a very different manner!" Thus do prejudice and partiality but too often enervate the influence of our example. With you, my pious hearers, this is not the caſe. Your good example operates more unimpeded and complete. When the merchant gives proofs of great probity and conſcientiouſneſs; when the opulent and the noble are modeſt and humane, ſhewing by their conduct how little their outward advantages avail in their eyes, and how little he that is poor and lowly ought therefore to be ſcorned; when the man of the world, or the layman, as he is called, teſtifies a reverence for God and religion, and mankind can diſcern his unfeigned piety; when any one, who, in reſpect of his fortune, might indulge in luxury and magnificence, and revel in all kinds of amuſements, yet lives in a becoming and orderly manner, and moderates himſelf in the enjoyment of ſenſual pleaſures; when perſons adorned with the charms of youth and beauty ſeek to diſtinguiſh themſelves, not by childiſh oſtentation and vanity, but by wiſdom and virtue, diſplaying indeed an open countenance and a cheerful diſpoſition, but not a thoughtleſs and frivolous behaviour; in ſhort, when they are ſeen to renounce their own holds and intereſts and truſts in all that man is moſt apt to depend upon, that they may the more expedite-

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ly follow Chriſt: this, my dear friends, this ſtrikes a far deeper impreſſion on all beholders, than our diſcourſes and actions can generally do.

Having hitherto been encountering prejudices no leſs hurtful than common, my pious hearers, we ſhall now find it ſo much the eaſier to illuſtrate the ſubject before us agreeably to its true nature and extent. If therefore this be not the relation in which the preacher ſtands towards his congregation, what then ought it to be, and what actually is it?

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No, my pious hearers, as often as I preach ſuch truths as tend to promote human perfection and happineſs; the truths that have a practical influence on the moral behaviour, and on the repoſe and ſatisfaction of mankind: ſo often do I preach Chriſt and him crucified; ſo often do I contribute to carry on his work on earth; ſo often do I proportionately ſupply his place among my brethren. For he came, he lived, he taught, he ſuffered and died, he aroſe again from the dead, and is now the head and the lord of his church, for diſſeminating truth and virtue and happineſs among the human race; and whatever advances them is his work, is conſiſtent with his aims, enlarges and confirms his kingdom; even though it be not immediately connected with his hiſtory, nor expreſsly contained in ſuch of his diſcourſes as are come down to us. Though truth

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through thy fatherly goodneſs and thy love to mankind, declared by thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt our lord; in whoſe words I conclude the ſervice of this whole day.

Our father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A longer Prayer, to be uſed at any other Time of the Day.

O GOD, who art the father and lord of all beings, and glorious in all perfection, I thine unworthy creature and ſervant, in the deepeſt ſenſe of my own manifold imperfections, approach thy divine majeſty: beſeeching thee, out of the abundance of thy goodneſs to be merciful to me. I acknowledge that many have been my failings and neglects, through the courſe of my life: and that, if thou ſhouldſt be extreme to mark, and to puniſh, what is, in every degree and every inſtance, amiſs; I could not hope for any portion of thy favour.

But, o Lord, the goodneſs and rectitude of thy nature; and thy holy goſpel preached by thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, encourage me to hope in thee for mercy and forgiveneſs: and therefore, as his diſciple, in expectation of thy favour upon the terms declared in that goſpel, I earneſtly beſeech thee to forgive every thought, every word and every action, by which I have in the leaſt degree offended thee, or tranſgreſſed the rules of virtue and true religion, from the beginning of my rational life to this hour. And this I beg, ſincerely reſolving to endeavour after a greater degree of perfection; and a greater conformity to thy holy will for the time to come: and hoping, on this condition alone, to be received by thee to favour here, and eternal happineſs hereafter.

Accept likewiſe the acknowledgments of my heart and mouth, which are ſo indiſpenſably due to the perfections of thy nature; and thy goodneſs to thy creatures. I adore, and celebrate, the unalterable glories of thy power, adorned and directed by unerring wiſdom and goodneſs: and bleſs and praiſe thee, for every inſtance of thy tender regards to me, and to all the children of men. I bleſs thee that, when it pleaſed thee to bring me into being, I was made capable of knowing and imitating thee, and of enjoying thy favour. I bleſs thee that I have been called to the knowledge of a religion, from which I have received many and great advantages, aſſiſtances and opportunities, to-

wards the anſwering the true deſign of my creation. I bleſs thee that, by the diſpoſitions of thy good providence, I have been led to an early and juſt ſenſe of virtue, and of the importance of true religion; and that this ſenſe has been improved by the beſt examples and ſentiments of others, and by many peculiar inſtances of thy merciful care and goodneſs.

I praiſe thy holy name for all that thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt did and taught and ſuffered in this world, in order to redeem mankind from the power and puniſhment of their ſins; to lead them more effectually to the knowledge of thee, and the practice of their duty; and to confirm to them the reaſonable hope of being immortally happy hereafter. For theſe and all thy mercies, which reſpect another and a better life than the preſent, my ſoul doth magnify thee, o Lord, and all the powers within me praiſe thy holy name.

Nor ought I to neglect to thank thee for thoſe many inſtances of thy mercy, by which thou haſt made my eſtate in this ſhort and uncertain life, much happier than it could have been without them: for affording me not only all the neceſſary ſupports, but many of the moſt deſirable conveniencies of ſuch a ſtate. Continue, o Lord, I beſeech thee, theſe thy temporal favours to me, if thou ſeeſt it conſiſtent with my chief and eternal good: if not, lead me to eternal life in whatever paths thou ſeeſt fit. I reſign myſelf and all my concerns into

into thy hands; and entreat thee to be my guide and my governour unto death. Let the ſenſe of theſe thine undeſerved mercies inſpire me with ſuch a gratitude as may ſhew itſelf in the ſuitable returns of a good life and holy converſation; and with ſuch a love of thee, as may expreſs itſelf in the keeping of thy commandments.

Whatever moral imperfections there are ſtill in me; direct me to the knowledge of them, and to the proper means of putting an end to them: and aſſiſt me by all the methods of thy wiſdom and goodneſs, in the great work I have to do; the perfecting of my mind in all that is truly excellent; and the working out of my ſalvation in the methods agreeable to thy holy will, and to the obligations of a reaſonable and moral agent.

I beſeech thee likewiſe, to be merciful to the whole world. Inlighten the dark corners of it with the true knowledge of thee, and of thy goſpel, in its ſimplicity: and ſow the ſeeds of all virtue and happineſs in all parts of it. Lead all profeſſed chriſtians to truth and righteouſneſs and peace; that ſo they may be an honour to the religion they profeſs. Put an end to idolatry and ſuperſtition, and all ſpiritual tyranny and oppreſſion. Give an open check to all that pride and ambition, which diſturb the world. Quiet the turbulent ſpirits, and compoſe the unchriſtian animoſities, of mankind.

Look down with much mercy upon this my native country. Cure our evil tempers; and con-

quer our unchriſtian and uncharitable diſpoſitions: and grant, that at length, mutual love and charity may flouriſh and abound amongſt us, amidſt our greateſt differences. Pour down all bleſſings, ſpiritual and temporal upon our moſt gracious King, and his Royal Family. Endow thoſe who are called to any office under him, for the adminiſtration of juſtice, or government, amongſt us, with all gifts and abilities neceſſary for the diſcharge of their great truſt: and proſper and protect them in the due execution of it. Lead all the miniſters of thy goſpel to teach thy truth in ſimplicity; and, by their example and doctrine, to bring themſelves, and thoſe who hear them, to eternal life.

Extend thy mercy and compaſſion to all afflicted perſons; of whatſoever ſort, or degree, their afflictions may be; to all who are in a ſtate of uneaſineſs of mind, or pain of body; a ſtate of want, or ſorrow; of perſecution, or oppreſſion: giving to them all the ſupports and aſſiſtances ſuitable to their ſeveral diſtreſſes; and, in thy good time, a happy iſſue out of all their calamities. Bleſs all in whom I am more nearly concerned, with everything truly good for them. Shower down thy mercies on my friends and benefactors; granting them all happineſs here, and hereafter. Forgive all my enemies, if ſuch there be; and ſhew thy mercy to them.

Finally, o Lord, pardon all my paſt ſins; guide and govern me, by thy holy ſpirit, in my ſincere endeavours to attain everlaſting life. Promote my

true

true happineſs, as thou ſeeſt fit; and
receive me, and my imperfect ſervices,
to thy goodneſs declared by thy wellbe
Jeſus Chriſt: in whoſe words I farther
everything neceſſary; and in behalf of e
am obliged to remember before thee; ſa

Our father, which art in heaven; hal
thy name. Thy kingdom come. Th
done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give
our daily bread. And forgive us our tre
we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us.
us not into temptation; but deliver us
for thine is the kingdom and the powe
glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

A large Form of Prayer, for more p
Occaſions.

O GOD, the ſupreme maker and go
the world, perfect in all that is truly
lovely; I, thine unworthy ſervant, app
thee, under the deepeſt ſenſe of thy glo
fections, and of my own great and many f
imperfections. Under this ſenſe, the on
and ſatisfaction to my mind is, that tho
juſt and too good not to accept of the
deavours of thy creatures to reform wh

been amiſs in their paſt conduct; and that thou haſt ſent thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt into the world, to ſave us from our ſins, and to declare to us plainly the terms of thy forgiveneſs and favour. In his name therefore, I preſent myſelf before thee: and, as his diſciple, I entreat of thee, the pardon of whatſoever thou haſt ſeen amiſs in me, from the beginning of my rational life to this day. Forgive, o lord, every wilful thought of my mind which has been diſagreeable to thy nature and precepts; every word of my mouth, unworthy of a man, or a chriſtian; every inſtance of my behaviour which has been diſpleaſing to thee, or my own conſcience: every offence, of whatſoever ſort or degree, againſt thee, my neighbour, or myſelf. Forgive me all the ſins which I myſelf can now call to my own remembrance; particularly [*Here it may be proper for a perſon to mention any remarkable inſtances, if he be conſcious of any ſuch: but highly improper to confeſs ſins, of which he knows not himſelf to have been guilty.*] And forgive me likewiſe all thoſe tranſgreſſions of thy holy will, which may now be out of the reach of my memory; but have been open to thy all-ſeeing eye, and are known to thee with all their circumſtances and aggravations.

Pardon me, o Lord, according to the abundant goodneſs of thy nature, and the declarations made by thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt: and grant me that forgiveneſs, which I neither aſk, nor expect, but upon thoſe terms and conditions which thy holineſs and

mercy

mercy have laid down in his goſpel. Behold, o Lord, I entirely and willingly forgive all who have, in any inſtance, or in any degree, offended or injured me: without which I ought to entertain no hopes of my own forgiveneſs. And if I have myſelf injured any perſon, I am as truly diſpoſed and ready to make all poſſible reparation, as I am to entreat thy favour to myſelf. And as I am ſenſible that no forgiveneſs can be expected, according to thy goſpel, without amendment of life; I ſeriouſly renounce all communication with whatſoever is diſpleaſing to thee; and ſincerely reſolve to make it my great endeavour to correct everything that is amiſs in my temper and behaviour; and to bring myſelf ſtill nearer to thy holineſs and happineſs. Forgive me therefore, as thou haſt promiſed by thy ſon. Accept me to thy mercy: and give ſucceſs, I earneſtly beſeech thee, by thy gracious favour and providence, to theſe purpoſes and deſigns of my ſoul.

And now, o Lord, according to the ſame goodneſs to thy creatures, graciouſly receive the earneſt petitions which I offer to thee for every good that it is fit for me to pray for. I acknowledge thee to be the great author of all our beings; the original of all our happineſs; the giver of all good gifts; and the diſpoſer of all events: and therefore profeſs my dependence upon thee alone for everything I ought to wiſh for, or deſire. I am ſenſible, o Lord, that to thee entirely I muſt owe, every degree

of

of happineſs I can ever enjoy, or hope for. I am ſenſible that thou art the tendereſt father and beſt friend to thy creatures: diſpoſed to lead them to their greateſt good; and ready to promote and aſſiſt their ſincere endeavours after it. And therefore before thee, and in thy preſence, I willingly lay open the deſires and wiſhes of my ſoul, which I think agreeable to reaſon, and thy holy will.

I eſteem it the glory of our nature that we are made capable of ſuch an exalted and rational happineſs as reſults from the knowledge of thee, and the imitation of thy moral perfections. And as thou haſt more fully aſſured us of this in the chriſtian religion; let the ſerious conſideration of that grace and mercy which has appeared in that diſpenſation effectually lead me to the good end propoſed in it. Let the holy precepts of that perfect inſtitution by which I profeſs to be guided, and the unſpotted example of that great maſter whoſe follower I deſire to be accounted, engage me to live in all reſpects as becomes the goſpel, and the diſciple, of Jeſus Chriſt. Particularly, o Lord, let the conſideration of the peculiar genius of that goſpel, and of thoſe virtues which the great author of it accounted the glory of his own life, influence me to endeavour to excel in them: and engage me to love the whole race of mankind with a univerſal charity, and beneficent diſpoſition; to rejoice at all opportunities of doing good either to the ſouls or bodies of men; and of adding to the ſatisfaction

and

and happineſs of all about me; to ſtoop even to the loweſt offices of kindneſs to others; to be ready to forgive the ſharpeſt and moſt undeſerved injuries, and to return pity and benevolence for them; and to be ever willing to condeſcend, and yield, for the good of others: that ſo, the trueſt humility, and the moſt extenſive charity, may adorn every action and circumſtance of my life; and all pride and paſſion and uncharitableneſs may be checked and ſubdued by the power of religion; and the lovelineſs of the contrary virtues.

Let the ſenſe of my own many failings, and the imperfections of our nature, diſpoſe me to be willing to put a candid and favourable interpretation, upon all thoſe actions of others, which can juſtly and reaſonably demand it, or admit of it; as well as to be ever ready to forgive the offences of others, towards myſelf. And let the ſenſe of thy goodneſs in allowing me ſtill time and opportunity, for perfecting my ſoul in all that is praiſeworthy, induce me to ſtudy more conſtantly and uniformly to pleaſe and imitate thee.

My outward condition with reſpect to the good things of this world, it is my happineſs, as well as my duty, to refer wholly to thy wiſe will and pleaſure. But as thou haſt ordained us to belong to this world, as well as to expect another; and haſt framed us ſo, that we cannot but be ſenſibly affected with our good and bad eſtate here below; of thee therefore it becomes us to beg, with ſubmiſſion

miſſion to thy providence, the ſecurity and continuance of the good things we already enjoy; and the increaſe of them, if that be truly good and needful. And as, by thy appointment, I have already experienced in this world, many evils and afflictions; and have been witneſs to many more around me; ſuffer me to implore the gracious regards of thy fatherly affection towards me: and to pray to thee, with reſpect to them, according to the pattern of thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, Father, if it be poſſible; if it be conſiſtent with thy wiſe and gracious purpoſes, and agreeable to them, ſecure me, and all in whoſe happineſs I am moſt nearly concerned, from all ſad accidents, and calamitous events; from all tormenting pains, and grievous diſeaſes; and from everything inconſiſtent with ſuch a happineſs as may lawfully be deſired in this tranſitory world. Nevertheleſs, not as I will, but as thou wilt. And therefore, o Lord, if thy unerring wiſdom ſhall otherwiſe determine, let the ſerious meditation on the example of Chriſt himſelf, and that innumerable company of the beſt of men, who have gone before me in this conflict, inſpire me with a zeal to imitate their patience; and let the contemplation of thy fatherly goodneſs engage me to a hearty and rational ſubmiſſion to all thy diſpenſations: remembering what a happineſs it is, to be under the government of a being, who knows what is in all reſpects beſt; and who cannot afflict his creatures but for wiſe and good ends,

ends. And let the ſenſe of thy gracious deſign in all my afflictions, lead me to the true and right uſe of them: to diſengage my affections more and more from this world; and to ſeek for happineſs in a better and neverchanging ſtate.

Let the conſideration of the certainty of death, the laſt of all temporal evils, influence me to endeavour to make it happy by ſuch a virtuous life as may give me a well-grounded hope in thy mercy. Let the review of thoſe uncertainties, and troubles I have met with in this world, render me the more ready and contented, at thy appointed time, to leave it. And let the proſpect of glory and happineſs hereafter exalt my mind above any fond regards to this ſtate of ſin and miſery: and enable me to act as becomes one who truly believes life and immortality to be brought to light through the goſpel.

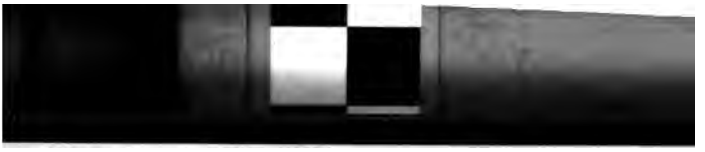
Finally, o Lord, my great and chief requeſt is, that, by the diſpoſitions of thy good providence, I may obtain everlaſting happineſs hereafter; and that the ſtate of this world, with reſpect to me, may be ſo ordered; and the trials, to be appointed for me in it, may be ſo proportioned to my condition and powers, as moſt effectually to promote and ſecure my eternal and greateſt good, after the few days of this life are paſt away. Deny to me therefore, out of thy great goodneſs, whatſoever is truly bad or unfit for me; though I ſhould be ſo weak as to deſire and wiſh for it: and grant me everything

everything that is truly good for me; though I ſhould be ſo blind, and ſo void of wiſdom, as not to ſee, or aſk it. As far as my petitions are reaſonable, and agreeable to the eternal laws of wiſdom, and the purpoſes of thy governing providence, and thy holy goſpel; ſo far only I entreat thy favourable conſent to them. As far as they are not ſo, I utterly renounce them; and ſubmit my own will entirely to thine: and, in a deep ſenſe of my own imperfections, beg of thee to accept of the ſincerity of my heart; and, out of the abundant goodneſs of thy nature, to overlook and ſupply all the defects of my ſervices.

To theſe petitions it becomes me to add the indiſpenſable tribute of the ſincereſt praiſes and thankſgivings of my ſoul; due to the glories of thy nature, and to thy goodneſs to thy creatures. I know, o God, that thy perfections are far exalted above all that can be conceived or expreſſed by us; that thy mercies are above all our thanks; and that thy unalterable attributes ſtand not in need of any homage we can pay. But it becomes us to acknowledge, and celebrate them.

The glories of thy nature, are the glories of perfect power and perfect holineſs, adorned with perfect goodneſs, and guided by unerring wiſdom and knowledge: ſuch glories as are, in themſelves, worthy of our higheſt admiration and praiſes; as well as the foundation of all the happineſs we ourſelves can poſſibly enjoy, or hope for.

And



And as it becomes us to celebrate the lovely perfections of thy nature, as it is in itſelf: ſo are we indiſpenſably obliged to pay thee our moſt grateful acknowledgments for the diſplay of thoſe perfections in all thy diſpenſations towards thy creatures, and for every inſtance of thy tender regards to us. Accept therefore, o gracious Lord and merciful father, the poor tribute of my unfeigned thanks for the manifold experiences which I have had of thy loving kindneſs, and the many marks I have received of thy undeſerved favour. To thee I owe my exiſtence; and, together with it, all the faculties and powers that diſtinguiſh our nature from that of the lower animal world. And as it is impoſſible to conceive any end in thy creating me, and placing me in that rank of creatures to which I belong, but the glory of communicating thy own happineſs in all fitting proportion: ſo, when I conſider what it is to be made capable of knowing thee, the fountain of all good; of imitating thee, the great original of all perfection; and of enjoying thy favour, the foundation of all laſting and ſubſtantial happineſs; I muſt acknowledge thy undeſerved goodneſs, and for ever praiſe thee for making me capable of ſo ineſtimable bleſſings.

I muſt remember likewiſe, with the higheſt gratitude, before thee, that, in order to ſecure and carry forward this gracious end of our creation the more effectually, it has pleaſed thy goodneſs to ſend

ſend thy beloved ſon into the world, to teach and live and die in order to ſave us from our ſins, and to conduct us effectually to our true and everlaſting happineſs. I bleſs thee for the divine inſtructions he has given his followers concerning the certain method of obtaining eternal life; for the blameleſs and perfect example of holineſs and patience, he has ſet before us; for his humbling himſelf even to the death upon the croſs, and ſhedding his blood for the remiſſion of our ſins; and for his plain declarations of thy gracious acceptance of all ſuch as ſincerely receive him for their maſter, and heartily endeavour to know, and comply with, his terms. I bleſs thee for the mighty evidences he gave that he was truly ſent by thee on ſo gracious an errand, by the purity of his doctrine; by the integrity of his life; by the nature and number of his miracles; by the glory of his reſurrection after an ignominious death; by his aſcenſion into heaven; and by his pouring down from thence the wonderful gifts of the holy ſpirit, in order to the propagation of his religion, and the ſettlement of his church: by all theſe arguments eſtabliſhing our conſciences in peace and truth.

I bleſs thee that the joyful ſound of thy goſpel has arrived to this part of the world; that it has here, by the peculiar favour of thy good providence, been reformed from many groſs abuſes under which it long laboured; and now lies open to the view and ſtudy of all men: that, by thy merci-

ful

ful appointment, I have been called to the knowledge of it, as it is in itſelf; and ſo am the better aſſured of the true way to happineſs; the more forcibly engaged to follow after it; and the more likely to obtain great degrees of it, if I be not wanting to myſelf: for all which inſtances of thy undeſerved and ineſtimable goodneſs, no words can ſufficiently expreſs the grateful ſentiments which ought to fill and poſſeſs my ſoul.

Accept likewiſe, o God, my moſt hearty and unfeigned thanks for the conſtant regards of thy good providence towards me: to which I am indebted for many ſingular and peculiar happineſſes. To thee I owe, that I was born in a country, where chriſtianity is ſecurely profeſſed; that I have been inſtructed in the principles of true religion and virtue; and my mind led to the knowledge of the moſt uſeful and important truths: and particularly, that I have been ſecured by thy goodneſs from many of thoſe great and hazardous trials which have ſo often proved fatal to others. To thee I owe whatever opportunities I have enjoyed of improving myſelf in what is truly praiſeworthy; whatever peculiar advantages there are in that condition, in which it has pleaſed thee to place me with reſpect to this world, towards the attainment of the greateſt good and happineſs of a reaſonable creature. To thee, the great creator and governour of the world, I owe all theſe bleſſings; and

to thee I offer up my ſincereſt acknowledgments for them.

I bleſs thee for that daily care of thy government over this world, by which I have been preſerved, ever ſince I was born, from innumerable dangers; many more than I can number, and many more than I know of. A mercy! which I ought thankfully to acknowledge, not merely with reſpect to this life, but to a better; as by this means I have ſtill greater opportunities of advancing yet farther in the paths of virtue, and adding an increaſe to my happineſs in the world to come.

I deſire likewiſe to offer up my unfeigned thanks for all thoſe temporal bleſſings and conveniencies, by which thou haſt made my paſſage through this world much more tolerable and eaſy than it could otherwiſe have been; for the uſe of my reaſon, and underſtanding preſerved to me, without which all other bleſſings are vain; for that meaſure of health and ſtrength; that eaſe, and freedom from pain, which I have enjoyed; for the ſupports of friendſhip and ſociety; for the comforts of food and raiment and habitation; and for all the good with which thou haſt in mercy ſurrounded me, and thoſe in whoſe good eſtate I am nearly concerned: whilſt ſo many others paſs their lives under the heavy preſſure of the contrary evils.

What can I render unto thee, o Lord, worthy of all the numberleſs inſtances of thy favour which I have

I have experienced? I praiſe and magnify th great and glorious name: and acknowledge myſe under the ſtricteſt and moſt indiſpenſable oblig tions to live and act in all reſpects, as becomes or that has taſted ſo largely of thy loving kindnes I profeſs, o Lord, my hearty reſolution of ende vouring to do ſo; and offer up my ſincere deſire that by the conſideration of what I have now r membered before thee, I may be led to make r turns in ſome degree ſuitable to ſo many, and great, inſtances of thy goodneſs.

Let the ſerious contemplation of thy glories ar perfections, incite me to endeavour conſtantly adorn my own nature with thoſe moral perfectio which I acknowledge to be ſo worthy of praiſ and engage me to imitate what appears truly lovely and glorious. Let the conſideratic of thy merciful deſign, in making me capable knowing thee, and being eternally happy in t favour; powerfully move me to make ſuch a u of thoſe faculties thou haſt endowed me with, th they may lead me to a due ſenſe of this happine and conduct me ſafe to the poſſeſſion of thoſe pl ſures which are at thy right hand. Let thy u ſpeakable mercy in ſending thy ſon into the wo for the ſecuring and promoting my happineſs, fectually influence me to embrace his offers; fulfil his commands; to imitate his example; and live in all reſpects as becomes his diſciple. Let t ſenſe of thoſe peculiar advantages which I have

thy eſpecial favour enjoyed, lead me to ſuch a careful uſe and improvement of them, that they may be the happy occaſions of more than ordinary degrees of perfection and glory hereafter. Let the conſideration of thy gracious deſign in affording me ſo many temporal good things, and ſo many comforts, in this imperfect ſtate, influence me to uſe them all to thy glory, as periſhing uncertain goods; to be enjoyed with temperance; and to be employed for the uſe and ſupport of others, as well as my own. And let the ſerious remembrance of all thy great and undeſerved goodneſs to me, open and enlarge my heart towards others; lead me to imitate what I praiſe and celebrate ſo much in thee; and teach me to be ready to do good to all; to pity the follies and miſeries of mankind; and as far as I am able, to promote the happineſs of all around me: that, by ſuch a return to all the inſtances of thy goodneſs and mercy, I may ſhew myſelf truly ſenſible of them; and ſincerely thankful for them.

[*Whoever finds this form too long to be uſed at once, may ſtop here, only adding* — Theſe prayers and praiſes I offer up to thee, in the name of thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, in whoſe words I further call upon thee, ſaying, Our father, &c. *And when he returns to make uſe of the remaining part, he may begin thus* — With the prayers and praiſes, which I have already preſented before thee this day, I beſeech thee, &c.]

With

With theſe prayers and praiſes, I beſeech thee, o God, to accept the ſincere expreſſions of my charity and goodwill towards thy whole rational creation: which I now offer to thee, the father of all, as a member of the whole ſociety of mankind; and more particularly as a member of the church of Chriſt, founded in love and charity. As ſuch, I ſincerely rejoice before thee in every degree of happineſs enjoyed by any of my fellow creatures here below; and heartily beſeech thee to diſpenſe more, and larger, communications of it to this lower world: to increaſe it in all thoſe who enjoy it in any meaſure; and to impart ſome portions of it to all who are in any ſort of miſery, and diſtreſs.

Look in great mercy upon the ſad eſtate of that part of mankind, who know not thy nature; nor worſhip thee, as becomes thy perfections. Put an end to their idolatry, and ſuperſtition, by ſhewing them the light and evidence of thy goſpel, in its ſimplicity: and, by bringing them to the knowledge of thy truth, lead them to a capacity of greater degrees of happineſs than they could otherwiſe arrive at. Have pity likewiſe on the remains of thy antient people, the jews; and all others, who are better inſtructed in the belief and worſhip of thee, than the pagan world: and guide them to a yet greater degree of true knowledge, by directing their way to the knowledge of thy ſon, and the practice of his laws; and bringing them by this

means to the juſtification and happineſs of chriſtians.

Viſit, with a more eſpecial grace and favour, the whole chriſtian world; all who are called by the name of thy ſon, and profeſs his holy religion. Behold, o Lord, a large ſcene of ſpiritual evils, worthy of thy gracious and merciful interpoſition: — in many places, the faith, once delivered to the ſaints in purity and ſimplicity, enervated by vain and groundleſs traditions; or darkened by the inventions of men: — the worſhip of thee, o Father, expreſsly eſtabliſhed by thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, in ſpirit and in truth, overclouded by numberleſs ſuperſtitions; and even deſtroyed by idolatry itſelf: — the moral laws which thy ſon came to reſcue from the corruptions of men, and to enforce upon his followers, rendered ineffectual by many human devices; and falſe notions of religion, ſet up inſtead of them: — and the progreſs of thy holy goſpel ſtopped and hindered by the wicked lives, and ſcandalous behaviour, of thoſe who profeſs it!

Interpoſe, I beſeech thee, and put an effectual ſtop to theſe great and unchriſtian evils. Confound the devices of all ſuch as uphold, or encourage any degree of ſuperſtition, for baſe and ſecular ends. Give a powerful check to all ſorts, and all degrees, of perſecution and oppreſſion, ſo ſcandalous and deſtructive to thy holy religion, which miſtaken or wicked men pretend to promote by ſuch impious methods. Put a ſtop to all ſpiritual tyranny;

tyranny; and to all uſurpation over the conſciences of men: and diſſipate thoſe clouds of ignorance which diſpoſe people to a baſe and ignominious ſlavery to the dictates of men, rather than to a rational inquiry into thy holy will which lies open to them. And above all, exert thine almighty arm in vindication of the cauſe of virtue: leading all profeſſed chriſtians to ſuch a ſenſe of the importance of it, as that they may ſtudy to adorn their lives with a behaviour ſuitable to their holy profeſſion; and recommend it to the experience and approbation of the unbelieving world by the integrity and unblamableneſs of their whole converſation.

Particularly grant, that all chriſtians, who have departed from the groſs corruptions of popery, may depart entirely from the ſpirit of it: that, as they profeſs to make the ſcripture the rule of faith; ſo they may without reſerve leave it as ſuch to all their neighbours: that, as they have nobly contended for their own religious liberty and chriſtian rights; ſo they may not loſe the glory of this, by contradicting it in their behaviour towards others: but that they may, by their exemplary deportment, and by their ſteady adherence to the principles of righteouſneſs, peace, and mutual forbearance, manifeſt to all the world the ſincerity of their reformation; and reap the fruit of it by ſtudying to excel in all that is praiſeworthy.

Nor ought I to forget, o great governour of the univerſe, the civil eſtate of the kingdoms of the

earth. Put an end, o Lord, at length, to the diſorders and confuſions, occaſioned by the weak and ambitious lords of this world: and ſhew thyſelf indeed, the king of kings, and lord of lords. Permit no longer the happineſs of human ſociety to be, in any part of thy creation, ruined and laid waſte by the inferior government of men, which was inſtituted ſolely for the ſupport and comfort of it. Bring public diſgrace and confuſion, upon all tyrants and oppreſſors; and honour with particular marks of thy favour, all princes, who ſincerely ſtudy to anſwer the ends of their inſtitution: that ſo, the triumphs of inſatiable ambition may at length ceaſe from the earth; and the bleſſings of good government be felt throughout the world.

Amongſt all the kingdoms of the earth, look, I beſeech thee, with a particular favour, upon this, to which, by the diſpoſal of thy providence, I belong; and for which therefore I am obliged in an eſpecial manner to ſhew my concern, by the heartieſt wiſhes of my ſoul. Pardon our many and crying ſins; and, in order to avert thy judgments, lead every ſinner amongſt us to ſuch a ſenſe of his ſins, as may engage him heartily to renounce and forſake them. Continue, and confirm to us, that peculiar form of government, ſo wonderfully hitherto preſerved to us; by which we are more effectually ſecured againſt the extremes of confuſion, and arbitrary power, than any other nation; and of which we enjoy the happy fruits every moment of our lives.

Preſerve

Preſerve and eſtabliſh us in the free enjoyment of the light of thy holy goſpel, and the ſecure profeſſion of our religion. What errors ſtill remain amongſt proteſtants, do thou effectually remove, by the methods of thy wiſe providence; and eſpecially ſuch as may have a bad influence upon the conduct of men's lives: and ſtrengthen their common intereſt againſt their common enemy. To this end, give a check to the mutual violences, and hatreds, and uncharitable behaviour, of men of evil diſpoſitions on every ſide. Kindle once again the fire of love and charity amongſt us: and permit not our differences in religious matters to extinguiſh this fire, or to blow up another to our entire deſtruction.

Pour down the choiceſt of thy bleſſings upon our moſt gracious King GEORGE. Defend him, by the peculiar care of thy providence, from all attempts of violent and unreaſonable men, againſt his perſon or crown: and proſper all his good deſigns and endeavours to preſerve his people in peace, liberty and happineſs. Together with him, bleſs all who have any part in the adminiſtration of our government. Aſſiſt him and them, in the great and important buſineſs of their ſtations. Guide them into the beſt and wiſeſt meaſures; and give ſucceſs to all their counſels and labours, for the advantage of this nation; or for the relief and ſupport of any of our injured neighbours.

Permit not the diſpoſal of the lives and properties of thy people ever to come into the hands of ignorant

ignorant or partial men: but manifeſt thy great concern for juſtice here below, in ſuch manner, as that the guilty may ever meet with their due puniſhment, and the injured and oppreſſed find a ſure redreſs, in our courts of judicature. Direct all the magiſtrates amongſt us to a deep ſenſe of their duty: to give all encouragement to virtue, and all poſſible diſcouragement to vice, both by their example, and the due execution of their offices.

Lead all thoſe to whom the great concerns of religion and of the ſalvation of mankind, are more particularly committed, to ſuch a knowledge of all neceſſary truths; ſuch an exemplary and chriſtian converſation; ſuch a prudent and conſtant diſcharge of their holy office; as may effectually promote the happineſs of themſelves, and of thoſe committed to their care. Encourage and promote amongſt us, the means and methods of ſuch a virtuous and laudable education, as tends to ſound learning and religion; to the reformation of this, and the better eſtate of future generations.

I deſire likewiſe to expreſs before thee the real ſenſe I have of the miſeries and calamities of the diſtreſſed part of mankind; and the ſincere deſire I have of contributing to their eaſe and relief. O thou father of mercies, and God of all conſolation, what can we do for that multitude of deplorable objects of compaſſion, who are out of the reach of our knowledge, or of our ability to relieve, but offer up our earneſt wiſhes to thee, the great diſpoſer of proſperity

and

and adverſity? Behold, o Lord, I ſympathize with all the unhappy; and bear a part in all the miſeries experienced in this world: and do with the greateſt earneſtneſs beg of thee for all the miſerable, of what ſort or degree ſoever, whatever, I could reaſonably beg for myſelf, were I in their condition. Aſſiſt them all in their ſeveral trials and conflicts; and guide them to ſuch a degree of contentment, reſignation and patience, as may render their preſent afflictions the happy occaſion of their greater future glory; and, as far as it is conſiſtent with the purpoſes of thy wiſdom, put an end to their preſent misfortunes and troubles.

Reſtore light and comfort to the dark, melancholy and diſtracted minds of thoſe who have loſt the uſe of their reaſon in any inſtance, or any degree. Pity the deſtitute condition of thoſe who are in want of any of the neceſſary circumſtances of life; particularly of thoſe who are fallen from the comforts of a proſperous condition to the miſeries of adverſity: and raiſe them up friends and patrons in their low eſtate. Relieve by thy good providence the wants of the poor and needy. Be a father to the fatherleſs; plead the cauſe of the helpleſs widow; and regard the unhappy ſtate of all who mourn the loſs of thoſe, in whom any part of their happineſs was placed.

Strengthen and aſſiſt, in an eſpecial manner, all who ſuffer any where for the love of truth, or the teſtimony of a good conſcience; and do thou ſo

proportion

proportion to their ſtrength, the meaſure and duration of their ſufferings, that they may work for them a more exceeding weight of glory. Hear the groans of all who are oppreſſed and barbarouſly treated, by the tyrants of this world; and grant a redreſs to all their miſeries. Attend to the ſighs and tears of ſuch as are in captivity and ſlavery; and open a way to their future liberty and ſecurity.

Viſit with thy light and comfort all who are afflicted with bodily pain, or any ſort of ſickneſs: and bring to their mind all ſuch conſiderations and aſſiſtances, as are neceſſary and proper to ſupport them in their unhappy condition; or to diſpoſe and fit them for their paſſage into another ſtate. Remove in much compaſſion all thoſe unreaſonable doubts and deſpondencies, with which many innocent and honeſt minds are in this world diſturbed and over-clouded; and direct them to ſuch juſt notions of thee, and of thy holy goſpel, as may eſtabliſh them in a courſe of cheerful and ſincere obedience to the laws of it.

Succeed the endeavours of all who honeſtly and induſtriouſly labour after a convenient livelihood in this world, and are uſeful members of the commonwealth; and bring to nought the deſigns of all who either privately or openly live upon the ſpoil of their neighbours; and are the plague and terror of human ſociety.

Requite in the courſe of thy good providence, the kindneſs of all who have at any time, or in any degree,

degree, endeavoured to contribute to the advantage of my mind, body, or outward eſtate. Upon all who have either done, or deſigned me good of any ſort, ſhower down thy rewards and favour. And, if there be any, who have either deſigned, or done me real miſchief; in return to their evil, I beg and entreat for thy pardon and thy bleſſings. Correct the evil diſpoſition of all ſuch minds; and plant in them, inſtead of it, a temper worthy of men and chriſtians. Let the conſideration of their own eternal intereſt lead them all to charity and love: and engage them to put on thoſe diſpoſitions which only can fit them for the bleſſed ſociety above.

Bleſs all in whom I am more nearly concerned, or in whoſe happineſs I take a particular part, with ſuch a meaſure of health, ſucceſs and proſperity, as may beſt carry forward the deſigns of thy goodneſs towards them; and moſt effectually promote their happineſs here and hereafter. But whatever be thy diſpenſations toward them, with reſpect to this life; lead them all, I beſeech thee, into thoſe paths which will infallibly convey them to thy heavenly kingdom in the world to come.

Finally, o Lord, I wiſh and pray for all good things to the whole race of mankind. I rejoice in every degree of virtue and happineſs to be ſeen here below. I mourn for every degree and every inſtance of vice and miſery. Let thy kingdom come, I beſeech thee: and ſhew thine almighty power,

power, by eſtabliſhing true religion amongſt men; and putting a ſtop to all the calamities of this lower world.

Accept, o Lord, I moſt earneſtly beſeech thee, the ſentiments and deſires of my heart, which I have now poured out before thee, under an actual ſenſe of thy preſence, and of thy providence over-ruling and directing all things. Favourably receive the acknowledgments I have made of my ſins and moral imperfections: and grant me pardon and peace upon the terms of thy goſpel. Hear and anſwer the petitions I have offered up, for the obtaining all things truly good, and the averting all things evil. Let the praiſes and thankſgivings which my heart hath ſent up, as the homage due to thy perfections and goodneſs, be acceptable to thee. And reject not the interceſſions I have made for the temporal and eternal happineſs of all my fellow-creatures.

And now, o Lord, take me, I once more entreat thee, into thy powerful and wiſe protection: and guide me, by the diſpoſitions of thy providence and good ſpirit, to the perfect knowledge and performance of thy holy will here; and to the enjoyment of that eternal and unalterable happineſs hereafter, which thou haſt reſerved for thy faithful ſervants, and promiſed by thy well-beloved ſon, Jeſus Chriſt. In his name, and as his diſciple, I truſt for acceptance of myſelf, and all my ſincere, though imperfect ſervices: and in his words I continue

tinue to entreat thy mercy towards myſelf, and all whom I am obliged to pray for.

Our father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

PRAYERS FOR A FAMILY.

A Prayer for Morning and Evening.

O LORD, perfect in wiſdom, goodneſs, and power; glorious in all that can be truly called perfection, we thy creatures and thy ſervants proſtrate ourſelves before thee, in the deepeſt ſenſe of our own unworthineſs, and of thy lovely and incomprehenſible perfections: acknowledging the glories of thy nature, as it is in itſelf; and thy great goodneſs to us, and to the whole world of thy creatures.

We are truly ſenſible of the great happineſs of knowing thee; and of imitating thee; and of enjoying the communications of thy favour hereafter: upon which accounts, it highly becomes us to praiſe thee for that act of goodneſs in our creation,

by which thou haſt endowed us with faculties fitted for the attainment of this unſpeakable happineſs; and for the enjoyment of the higheſt good hereafter.

We praiſe thee for thy great goodneſs in our preſervation here, ever ſince we were brought into being: not only as it reſpects this world, in which we now live; but as by it we are enabled to make the better proviſion for our everlaſting intereſt in the world to come; and have greater opportunities of improving our ſouls in virtue, and of ſecuring our happineſs for ever. More particularly we now bleſs thee for the care of thy providence over us, by which we have been preſerved in ſafety through the paſt [*day* or *night*,] and mercifully defended from all dangers and diſtreſſes.

It becomes us likewiſe to acknowledge thy bounty and goodneſs, manifeſted to us through every part of our lives, to this time; to thank thee for that meaſure of health and ſtrength and quiet, which we have hitherto enjoyed; for the comforts and ſupports of all thoſe neceſſaries and conveniences, without which we ſhould be much more unhappy in this ſtate, than we now are, and for all other circumſtances and advantages of life, which help to make our paſſage through this world more happy, or more tolerable, than otherwiſe it could be.

But above all, we bleſs and magnify thy great and glorious name for thy tender regards to our everlaſting happineſs in a better ſtate hereafter: for ſending thy ſon into the world to declare to us the

the certainty of a future ſtate of rewards and puniſhments, and for all that he did and taught and ſuffered, in order to reconcile mankind to thee; and to guide us all to eternal life and glory: for the great happineſs of a good and virtuous education; and for thoſe peculiar diſpoſitions of thy providence which have often guarded us from many particular and hazardous trials and temptations. For theſe, and for all other thy mercies, which concern our great and eternal intereſt, we ſincerely thank thee, o Lord, and will ever praiſe thy holy name.

It is with ſhame and grief that we reflect upon the returns we have made to ſo much mercy. We confeſs, o Lord, that we have not lived as becomes reaſonable creatures, called to the knowledge of ſuch a God, and of ſuch a ſaviour. Many have been our failings; many have been our omiſſions and neglects, in the performance of our duty, and in the perfecting ourſelves in all virtue. Many have been our offences in thought, word and deed, againſt thy divine majeſty: and many are ſtill our imperfections. But, o merciful father, we beſeech thee, in the name of thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, to pardon us now returning to thee, with the full purpoſe of regarding more ſtrictly the obligations of gratitude and obedience we are under; and of living, for the time to come, more like thy ſervants, and like chriſtians.

And now, o Lord, confeſſing and renouncing all our ſins; and hoping for the pardon of all that

is paſt, through thy ſon Jeſus Chriſt, as far only as we ſincerely endeavour to reform and amend whatſoever we know to be amiſs in ourſelves; we beſeech thee to concur with us, by thy merciful providence, and good ſpirit, that, in the future conduct of our lives, we may better anſwer the ends of our moſt holy religion, and adorn the goſpel which we profeſs to believe.

Let the experience of thy repeated mercies, inflame us with a reſolution of making ſuitable returns to them. Let the belief of future glories raiſe our minds above the ſordid views of this world. Let the conſideration of thine infallible wiſdom and undoubted goodneſs, teach us heartily and quietly to ſubmit ourſelves to all the diſpenſations of thy providence towards us, as to the will of one, who has always wiſe and excellent purpoſes to ſerve; and knows what is beſt for us, infinitely better than we poſſibly can. Let the example of our bleſſed ſaviour, ever placed before our eyes, direct our ſteps in every ſtation of life, and every inſtance of duty: and let our hopes and affections be unmovably fixed upon thoſe rewards which are laid up in heaven for all who, by patient continuance in well-doing, ſeek after glory and immortality. Finally, let the conſideration of thy holy preſence everywhere, govern all our thoughts, words and actions, as under the eye of thy majeſty; and lying open to thee, our ſupreme governour and judge: that ſo our irregular paſſions

ſions may loſe their power over us; and we may daily proceed to greater degrees of all holineſs and virtue.

We now particularly deſire to put ourſelves under thy protection, this [*day* or *night*,] and to implore thy fatherly care over us: that no evil may approach us; but that our ſouls and bodies may be ſafe under that good and powerful providence in which we entirely truſt.

We extend likewiſe our regards to all the world of reaſonable creatures; and pray for the happineſs and good eſtate of all mankind: that they may all know and worſhip and obey thee, as they ought; and particularly, that all who name the name of Chriſt may depart from iniquity, and live as becomes his holy goſpel. Put a ſtop to the miſeries occaſioned by ambition and tyranny, whether temporal or ſpiritual: put an end to every degree of idolatry and ſuperſtition; perſecution and oppreſſion: and give ſucceſs to the labours of all, who ſtudy the happineſs of thy creatures; and preach the goſpel of thy ſon, in ſimplicity and love.

Regard with much mercy theſe nations to which we belong. Pardon our crying ſins: and lead all ſinners amongſt us to true and unfeigned repentance; that iniquity may not be our ruin, or prevent the mercies we might otherwiſe hope for. Pour down the choiceſt of thy bleſſings upon our moſt gracious ſovereign, King GEORGE; and ſo direct him, and all that are in authority under

him, by thy gracious guidance, that they may faithfully diſcharge the great truſt repoſed in them, by being a terror to evildoers only, and a praiſe to all that do well. Let the remembrance of the great and ſolemn account to come, engage all orders of men amongſt us, conſcientiouſly to perform their duties in their ſeveral places and ſtations, with all faithfulneſs and charity.

Bleſs, we beſeech thee, with all bleſſings of ſoul and body, our relations and friends: leading them to all virtue and happineſs here, and rewarding them with eternal life hereafter. Requite the kindneſs of all who have done, or deſigned, us any good: and pardon the malice of all who have done, or wiſhed, us any evil; guiding them to repentance, and ſhewing thy mercy upon them.

We have a deep ſenſe, o Lord, of the miſeries experienced in this world: of the wants of the poor and needy; of the ſickneſſes, the pains and diſtreſſes of the afflicted part of mankind. We truly ſympathize with them: and intercede for them, that in thy providence they may find relief; and have reaſon to rejoice at the end, for the days wherein they have ſeen adverſity.

And now, o Lord, we again commend ourſelves, and all belonging to us, to thy gracious protection and care: referring ourſelves wholly to thee for what is truly neceſſary and good for us, in this world; and above all entreating thee, effectually to diſpoſe the way of thy ſervants towards the at-

tainment of everlaſting ſalvation in the world to come; and beſeeching thee to hear and to accept us, as the diſciples of Jeſus Chriſt thy ſon our lord: in whoſe name we pray unto thee; and in whoſe comprehenſive words we ſum up all our requeſts.

Our father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil: for thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

Select Prayers, &c. out of the Common-Prayer, for the Uſe of a Family, Morning and Evening.

Confeſſion.

ALMIGHTY and moſt merciful Father; we have erred and ſtrayed from thy ways like loſt ſheep. We have followed too much the devices and deſires of our own hearts. We have offended againſt thy holy laws. We have left undone thoſe things which we ought to have done; and we have done thoſe things which we ought not to have

done; and there is no health in us. But thou, o Lord, have mercy upon us, miſerable offenders. Spare thou them, o God, which confeſs their faults. Reſtore thou them that are penitent; according to thy promiſes declared unto mankind in Chriſt Jeſu, our lord. And grant, o moſt merciful Father, for his ſake; that we may hereafter live a godly, righteous, and ſober life, to the glory of thy holy name. Amen.

ALMIGHTY and everlaſting God, who hateſt nothing that thou haſt made, and doſt forgive the ſins of all them that are penitent: create and make in us new and contrite hearts; that we worthily lamenting our ſins, and acknowledging our wretchedneſs, may obtain of thee, the God of all mercy, perfect remiſſion and forgiveneſs, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

The two following Prayers to be ſaid in the Morning.

O GOD, who art the author of peace, and lover of concord; in knowledge of whom ſtandeth our eternal life; whoſe ſervice is perfect freedom: defend us, thy humble ſervants, in all aſſaults of our enemies; that we, ſurely truſting in thy defence, may not fear the power of any adverſaries,

ſaries, through the might of Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, almighty and everlaſting God, who haſt ſafely brought us to the beginning of this day; defend us in the ſame with thy mighty power; and grant that this day we fall into no ſin, neither run into any kind of danger: but that all our doings may be ordered by thy governance, to do always that is righteous in thy ſight, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

Theſe two at Night.

O GOD, from whom all holy deſires, all good counſels and all juſt works do proceed; give unto thy ſervants that peace, which the world cannot give: that both our hearts may be ſet to obey thy commandments; and alſo that by thee we, being defended from the fear of our enemies, may paſs our time in reſt and quietneſs, through the merits of Jeſus Chriſt our ſaviour. Amen.

LIGHTEN our darkneſs, we beſeech thee, o Lord: and by thy great mercy defend us from all perils and dangers of this night, for the love of thy only ſon, our ſaviour, Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

O GOD, the protector of all that truſt in thee, without whom nothing is ſtrong, nothing is holy; increaſe and multiply upon us thy mercy: that, thou being our ruler and guide, we may ſo paſs through things temporal, that we finally loſe not the things eternal. Grant this, o heavenly Father, for Jeſus Chriſt's ſake our lord. Amen.

O GOD, whoſe neverfailing providence ordereth all things, both in heaven and earth; we humbly beſeech thee to put away from us all hurtful things and to give us thoſe things which be profitable for us, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

For the KING.

O LORD, our heavenly Father, high and mighty, king of kings, lord of lords, the only ruler of princes, who doſt from thy throne behold all the dwellers upon earth; moſt heartily we beſeech thee, with thy favour to behold our moſt gracious ſovereign lord King GEORGE: and ſo repleniſh him with the grace of thy holy ſpirit, that he may alway incline to thy will, and walk in thy way. Endue him plenteouſly with heavenly gifts. Grant him in health and wealth long to live. Strengthen him, that he may vanquiſh and overcome all his enemies; and finally after this life he may attain everlaſting

laſting joy and felicity, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

For the Royal Family.

Almighty God, the fountain of all goodneſs, we humbly beſeech thee to bleſs our gracious Queen Charlotte; their Royal Highneſſes George prince of Wales, the princeſs of Wales, and all the Royal Family. Endue them with thy holy ſpirit; enrich them with thy heavenly grace; proſper them with all happineſs; and bring them to thine everlaſting kingdom, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

For all Conditions of Men.

O GOD, the creator and preſerver of all mankind, we humbly beſeech thee for all ſorts and conditions of men, that thou wouldſt be pleaſed to make thy ways known unto them; thy ſaving-health unto all nations. More eſpecially we pray for the good eſtate of the catholic church: that it may be ſo guided and governed by thy good ſpirit, that all, who profeſs and call themſelves chriſtians, may be led into the way of truth; and hold the faith in unity of ſpirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteouſneſs of life. Finally, we commend to thy fatherly goodneſs, all thoſe who are any ways afflicted, or diſtreſſed, in mind, body, or eſtate: that

that it may pleaſe thee to comfort and relieve them, according to their ſeveral neceſſities; giving them patience under their ſufferings, and a happy iſſue out of all their afflictions. And this we beg for Jeſus Chriſt his ſake. Amen.

A General Thankſgiving.

ALMIGHTY God, Father of all mercies, we thine unworthy ſervants do give thee moſt humble and hearty thanks for all thy goodneſs and loving kindneſs to us, and to all men. We bleſs thee for our creation, preſervation, and all the bleſſings of this life: but above all for thine ineſtimable love in the redemption of the world by our lord Jeſus Chriſt; for the means of grace and for the hope of glory. And we beſeech thee give us that due ſenſe of all thy mercies, that our hearts may be unfeignedly thankful; and that we may ſhew forth thy praiſe, not only with our lips, but in our lives, by giving up ourſelves to thy ſervice, and by walking before thee in holineſs and righteouſneſs all our days, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord; to whom, with thee and the holy ghoſt, be all honour and glory world without end. Amen.

O ALMIGHTY Lord, and everlaſting God, vouchſafe, we beſeech thee, to direct, ſanctify and govern, both our hearts and bodies, in the ways of thy laws, and in the works of thy commandments;

ments: that, through thy moſt mighty protection, both here and ever, we may be preſerved in body and ſoul, through our lord and ſaviour Jeſus Chriſt. Amen.

ASSIST us mercifully, o Lord, in theſe our ſupplications and prayers; and diſpoſe the way of thy ſervants towards the attainment of everlaſting ſalvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, they may ever be defended by thy moſt gracious and ready help, through Jeſus Chriſt our lord. Amen.

OUR Father, which art in heaven; hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done in earth, as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our treſpaſſes, as we forgive them that treſpaſs againſt us. And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil, for thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever and ever. Amen.

THE grace of our lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the love of God, and the fellowſhip of the holy ghoſt be with us all ever more. Amen.

THE END.

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ZOLLIKOFER'S

Sermons on Education, on Reflection, on the Greatneſs of God in the Works of Nature and in the Government of the World, on Charity, and on various other Topics, in two Vols. 8vo.

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OUR Engliſh divines are in general reputed to ſurpaſs all other moraliſts in reſpect to the *matter* of their diſcourſes. Maſſillon, perhaps will bear away the prize, if his merits be eſtimated by the magic of his eloquence: but, in ſolidity, and in copiouſneſs of argument, he muſt yield the palm to Barrow. The one excells by a happier addreſs, and a more ſplendid *copiâ verborum*; the other captivates by the very want of ornament, by his unaffected gravity, *et rerum abundantiâ*.

In ſeeking our rivals on the continent, however, in this department of Literature we muſt extend our inquiries beyond the limits of the Gallican church; and, ſince the productions of German Authors are become ſo familiar through the medium of tranſlations, it will be requiſite to know with what formidable opponents we have to contend in the Reformed Churches of that quarter. — In this examination; the ſpecimen of Mr. Zollikofer's Sermons, which is now preſented to the Engliſh public, will ſufficiently evince that juſt conceptions of morality, ſound philoſophical reaſoning, perſpicuity, and ſimplicity are not peculiar to the Engliſh pulpit. They breathe the pure and genuine ſpirit of Chriſtianity, and they exhibit religion to our view in a form the moſt animating and alluring; for, avoiding to terrify her votaries by disfiguring her bright countenance with an auſtere and gloomy brow, they rather invite and encourage all to approach her preſence, as to a kind and condeſcending queen, who ſits ſerene and chearful on her throne, and diſpenſes to all her ſubjects true wiſdom, conſolation, peace, and joy. We ſee little in theſe ſermons, indeed, to diſplay the theological learning of their author, and little that is explanatory in regard to peculiar texts of Scripture; they diſcuſs not human creeds and ſyſtems of divinity: but they explain the nature and grounds of Chriſtian morality and reconcile it with the beſt dictates of philoſophy; they reveal man to himſelf, and diſcover a talent ſeldom poſſeſſed — a knowledge of the human heart. We formerly had occaſion to notice a treatiſe of *Devotional Exerciſes* by this author, tranſlated by an ingenious diſſenting clergyman at Exeter, and of them alſo we ſpoke with much approbation. We are not yet, however, in poſſeſſion of all Mr. Zollikofer's works; but, by the aſſiſtance of Mr. Tooke, who, it appears, is continuing his uſeful labours in this line, we may expect ſhortly to have them complete.

Monthly Review.

"The

"The reputation already acquired by Mr. Zollikofer, miniſter of the evangelically reformed congregation at Leipzig, will certainly not ſuffer by the work with which Mr. Tooke has now favoured the public. It abounds in large and comprehenſive views, in deep thinking, in ſolid reaſoning, and is diſtinguiſhed by an arrangement at once eaſy and correct. The language in which the arguments are enforced, is manly and clear; and is well ſuited to the nature of the author's ſubjects, as well as to the manner in which they are treated. Theſe ſermons are indeed not common productions; and while we recommend the whole of them to the chriſtian world in general, we think ſome of them peculiarly deſerving the notice, the calm and patient attention, of thoſe "ſeekers" in religion, (to borrow an expreſſion from Mr. Pope's celebrated letter to biſhop Atterbury, vol. viii. p. 63.) who deem themſelves no vulgar inquirers, no ordinary ſceptics. If they do not find an anſwer to their inquiries, if they do not obtain reſt to their doubts, the fault is not in chriſtianity, it is not in the preſent acute and eloquent defender of it: it muſt be ſought for elſewhere; and may perhaps be found where they leaſt expect it, — in their own hearts. "For with the *heart* man believeth unto righteouſneſs." Rom. x. 10. Each of the ſermons is preceded by an appropriate prayer; and after what has been ſaid of them, our readers will be more obliged to us for extracts than for any obſervations of our own. — — On the whole it may be ſafely aſſerted, that he who does not riſe from the banquet a ſated gueſt, cannot complain either of the diſpoſition or the preparation of the viands. — — The prayers preceding the ſermons are ſtrongly recommended to the Engliſh clergy. They are not only elegant compoſitions, but always have a reference to the ſubject of the diſcourſe that follows them.

"With reſpect to the tranſlator, we have to ſay, that the public is much indebted to him for the taſk he has undertaken, and for the manner in which it has been executed. For this taſk he is extremely well qualified by a thorough acquaintance with the German language; and at the ſame time, what cannot be ſaid of every tranſlator, he is perfect maſter of his own. And it is only juſtice to Mr. Tooke to add, that the general turn of his ſtyle is entitled to commendation, and that we have noted very few inſtances in which — a thing almoſt unavoidable — the idiom of our own language is ſacrificed to that of the original.

ginal. 'The great peſt of ſpeech,' ſays Johnſon, in the preface to his Dictionary, 'is frequency of tranſlation. No book was ever turned from one language into another, without imparting ſomething of its native idiom.'

"It has been our lot to hear the author of theſe beautiful diſcourſes, addreſs his countrymen from the pulpit; we have heard this venerable paſtor, this exemplary chriſtian, this enlightened divine, deliver his ſermons, clothed in all that energy of which the German language is ſo eminently capable. — — We ſincerely wiſh that having aſſumed an engliſh garb, they may have that edifying effect upon engliſh readers which they are ſo eminently calculated to produce. Mr. Tooke will, we doubt not, think himſelf amply rewarded for his labours, if his tranſlation be the means of turning one ſinner from the error of his ways." Critical Review.

"If this preacher enters a pointed proteſt againſt introducing into the pulpit metaphyſical inveſtigations, and 'doctrines which are more fitted to beget doubt than faith,' he is by no means diſpoſed to confine public exhortation to a few ſubjects: on the contrary, he contends for the propriety of making everything, which belongs to the whole range and extent of practical wiſdom, tributary to the teacher. We have ſeen, on former occaſions, with what ſucceſs he avails himſelf of this privilege; and with what varied and perſuaſive eloquence he excites his hearers to virtue, and to the advancement of the real dignity of man.

"In the diſcourſes on the evils in the world, M. Zollikofer directs the thoughts of his auditors to the difficult ſubjects of natural and moral evil; not however by leading them into thoſe diſcuſſions, in which they will 'find no end, in wandering mazes loſt:' but he endeavours to furniſh them with ſuch conceptions as may ſerve to make them 'ſatisfied with the capacities which God has given them, with the bounds which he has preſcribed to them, with the place which he has allotted to them in his kingdom, with the burthens which he has laid on them, with the taſks which he has aſſigned to them, and with the purpoſes to which he has appointed them, without accuſing him of any want of goodneſs.' In this manner, he endeavours to enlighten them, to make them better, and thus to promote their felicity. His fundamental doctrine is that 'God is ſupremely good, that he is love itſelf, that he governs his creatures with the utmoſt lenity and forbearance,

bearance, that he judges them with the moſt perfect equity, that he is more inclined to bleſs than to puniſh, and that in all that he commands or forbids, in all that he gives or denies them, he ſeeks their happineſs alone.' Through this cheerful medium, he recommends us to view what are called evils as the only means of becoming truly religious, ſatisfied, and happy. — By thus contemplating the evils and afflictions which occur in the preſent world, as means of diſcipline and amendment, we not only obtain conſoling views of the divine adminiſtration, but are taught to form a true eſtimate of ourſelves and of our ſtate, as well as the true way of employing our faculties and exalting our nature. The preacher purſues the ſubject in ſeveral ſermons; and in a ſtrain of natural eloquence he endeavours to reconcile us to Providence, and at the ſame time to rouze us to all pious and chriſtian duties. He ſhews that death itſelf is not that enormous evil which it is ſuppoſed to be, and introduces the diſcoveries of revelation to ſolve all the difficulties which may at preſent oppreſs us: Raiſe your thoughts into the future world, &c.

"M. Zollikofer's remarks on public diverſions prove him to be a man whoſe genuine piety is not debaſed by the ſmalleſt portion of puritanical auſterity. While he endeavours to guard his hearers againſt vicious exceſs in the purſuit of amuſements, he aſſures them that he is actuated by no principle of moroſeneſs. 'You know,' he ſays, 'that I am no enemy to mirth and pleaſure, that I interdict you no kind of diverſion, ſo long as it is innocent and harmleſs; and am by no means deſirous of raiſing you to an imaginary perfection, of which the nature of man is not capable in its preſent ſtate, &c. It is obſerved moreover that the ſpirit of chriſtianity is a ſpirit of liberty and good humour; and in the introductory prayer, he rightly diſcriminates between the uſe and abuſe of the pleaſures of the world.

"We need ſcarcely repeat our favourable opinion of the merit of M. Zollikofer as a divine, nor of Mr. Tooke as a tranſlator. If the preacher be occaſionally diffuſe, his mind is ſtored with thought, and his heart is warm in the cauſe of religion and virtue. He is no common-place declaimer; — we cannot help feeling his piety, and loving him for his ſincerity and benevolence. His diſcourſes deſerve our warm recommendation."

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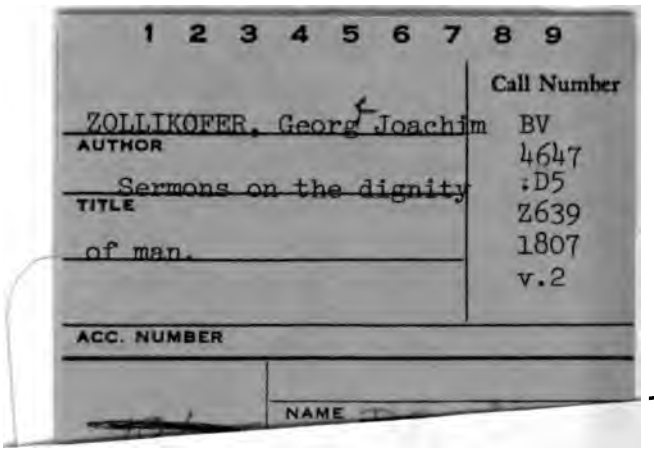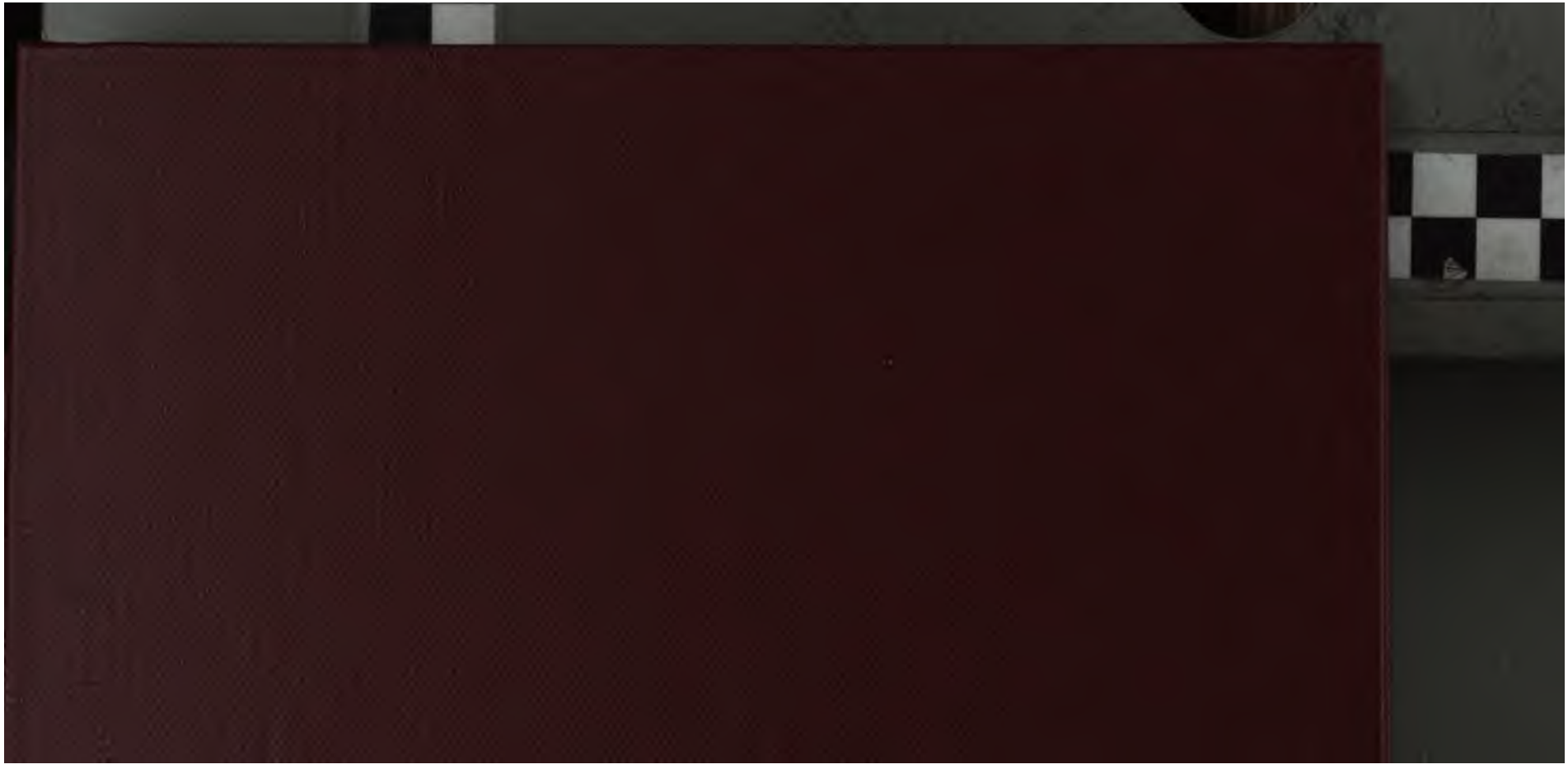
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